THE CONSCIENCE OF KASHMIR

English translation of
Kashmiri short stories

Ashraf Raavi

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Preface

It gives me immense pleasure to put forth translated Kashmiri short stories before readers. My intention is to acquaint non Kashmiri speaking people about the fiction in Kashmiri language.The Kasmiri short stories that I have translated range from the works of legendry Akhter Mohiuddin, Amin Kaamil, Ali Mohd Lone to Current writers like Raheem Rehber, Rasheed Raashid, Yousuf Jehangir and the like.

The anthology gives a historical perspective as how the short story has covered the paces and matured in the techniques, approach and viewpoint. The anthology is the delineation of Kashmiri Psyche and conscience and its delicacies since mid of twentieth century when the short stories have begun to be written.

I feel very humble in presenting the anthology to readers with request that they shall please endow me with their comments on the work so that I may publish my upcoming work with wisdom and enthusiasm.

I feel highly obliged to all those friends who have given their best suggestions while translating the works. My special thanks are to Rashid Raashid, Sikinder Irshad and Shahzada Rafiq for their suggestions in the selection of stories. I am thank full to my parents for upbringing me and to my wife Shazia who lets me free for literary activities handling the home affairs herself.

Ashraf Raavi

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The Brabble

Akhter mohiudin

All of a sudden Breesi the sweeper stood up and stroke Ashmi's top of the skull with an iron heeled sandal. He seized her by the hair and dragged her all along the room. It was the grace of God on her that Ashmi did not get fire on the clothes by the blaze of the open hearth and got ashed from head to toes. An earthen cauldron full of leg-meat was burbling on the chulha.

Ashmi broke to cry, "Hey! Isn't any body any where? Hey, he is about to kill me. May he knock down and wither."

Ho, may they finish for my sake. Whoever is yours anywhere?"Breesi the sweeper said to her after spitting to the right and left. "Do you consider me powerless? You ….."

"Why did you mention them? Go and die for their sake." Ashmi raised her voice louder than before. Do they come to bulldoze your chulha?"

On hearing the name of chulha, Breesi the sweeper recollected the cauldron of leg-meat and felt tense. He said to himself, "today we were to eat leg-meat after a long time but the witch deprived us from tasting it pleasantly." He said to Ashmi, "you do see early in the morning. I shall not be of my father if I will not divorce you"

"Ho, you are nothing. You are not suitable even to be the sacrificial animal for my grass sandal." Ashmi said raising her eyebrows up and waving her arms. "I will prefer to be a slave to somebody and earn my livelihood. I haven't lost my vitality?"

All the people living in neighborhood rushed in there. Salam the tanner came, Gula the flirty arrived, Noor kamal reached and

along with him all the youngsters and elders of the neighborhood rushed to the spot.

Khurshi the telltale came beating her bosom and saying, “Hey, Breesi what happened to you, see how you caused blood ooze from her top of her skull. Do you not have pity on her?”

Ashmi got strengthened and she said. “He is proud of his riches. Has anybody seen fifty rupees other than him? He believes that I have no option other than to stay here. Tomorrow I will get his senses cleared by my brothers. I am the sister of seven brothers.”

“Ho, fluterring sparrow” Breesi could not digest the warning and while twirling the fingers he said.

“O friends, what is the matter?” Noor Kamal initiated enquiry with utmost intelligence and said, “Will you tell us something or not? Ashmi, be silent now please”

“Shall I remain silent? I shall get him defamed in whole the world”, Ashmi said.

“Ho, who will you get insulted” Breesi angered again and he picked a ragged shoe to slap her with.

NoorKamal and Gula [the] flirty interfered and made him sit.

Breesi was suffocating. His face turned yellow like saffron and he sweated every hair. His hands trembled. His mind churned due to anger. Had oil lamp not been on the inbuilt upper shelf, it would have been trampled under the feet. The hookah had its pipe nowhere. The bowl broke into pieces. The little children raised hue and cry. Nobody was listening to anybody’s words. The only audible were abuses by Breesi and Ashmi’s full prepared and wholly uttered curses. Consequently Breesi turned to Noor Kamal, “Hey, oh friend of my boyhood, spit on my face and say “you are immoral, you are telling lies.”

“Now would you tell anything or not” Gula the flirty said to Breesi while turning his moustaches. He was standing near the

inbuilt-shelf perhaps rubbing fingers with wax from the oil lamp and then turning his moustaches. Yes, perhaps he was doing the same. Otherwise why did he stand near the oil lamp? All were sitting. He should have been sitting as well.

"Hey, what will I say to you" Breesi laughed a laughter of unfulfilled desire and said to him, " some time before when we received pay , I told you that I had demanded Sultan the butcher two quadruples of sheep legs. … Do you listen?"

"Of course, I remember." Gula the flirty witnessed.

"Be blessings on your life. Fifty rupees were received. Already there was Jamadar whom I gave two rupees. I wished to leave from the back door of the committee building and from there round the police lines via the backside of the tehsil office and reach home. There I had to give Gaffar the grocer ten rupees of goods. Haven't we taken the goods for the month?"

"Hey, be silent and listen to the truth." Noorkamal said, "I have decided that I will not pay him this month and flee from the back door. Later I shall think how I would arrange for the month?"

"Ho, may God bless you."

But the pig had entered into the yard of the committee hall and as soon as I received the pay he shouted at me from the backside, "O Kamal. Hey Noor kamal come!"

"Let us be Devoted to God" Breesi Witnessed favourably and to the point and he was getting pleased for the same.

"Then how could have I behaved feigning unfamiliarity and denied. I told him to take the money right then."

"May Almighty bless you" Breesi interrupted Noor kamal and said.

"I was caught by him as well in the same way, By God and By Prophet.

I took out ten rupees and put the same in his hand. Of course friend, again for the month we have to be before him with empty hands. What guilt the innocent did?"

All Okayed Breesi's comments and Ashmi's heart was on fire. If she could she would have extracted his heart out right then and fried it. She had pain in the top of the skull. She kept the sleeve of his Pheran under her head and lay flat. She was weeping .The tears were rolling down her eyes like the monsoon shower.

"Now these are ten" Breesi started telling loudly "Seven rupees were of Noora the grain seller for last month"

"Hey what are you saying to me I myself owe him. But he is kind I said to him"Hey respected Haji Sb I need money this month."

He showered me with some abuses and said, "Leave but you will pay next month necessairily."

"On my turn he too was adamant on taking his money.He kept following me. As such he is kind but what guilt he commited? For two months he has been waiting for seven rupees"

All of a sudden the oil lamp dropped from the inbuilt shelf and the room darkened. Some stood up and some sat. All were asking Ashmi about the location of matches. She was speaking no word except weeping. At last Khurshi the telltale blew some charcoal pieces from his kangri and lit the lamp.

"Hey, where has Gulla the flirty gone?" All of a sudden Nabir sheikh's Rosul spoke out. But no body replied and Breesi continued, "Are these seventeen. That is nineteen.Two to jamadar ten to Gaffar the grocer and seven to….

"Noor the grain seller" Rosul made him recollect.

"Let us be devoted to Almighty" Breesi said and these are nineteen now.

These Nineteen are immediate expenditure. Now say what I gobbled and I did not buy her a pheran pyjama for daughter"

"You always turn destitute at our turn.", Ashmi said as she was lying flat on the floor.You should have for the gambling. Stand and go. Sabir the plump has come for you"

"Hey, why she has to mention the name of the people?"Breesi said angrily "I will decide about her in the morning."

"O k . What have you done to the remaining six?'' Noor Kamal asked him. Meanwhile Sula the tanner came bubbling his hookah, "May you livelong" Noor Kamal spoke out whole heartedly .Sula the tanner kept the Hookah before Breesi and said to him. "Hey, smoke tobacco.Today I have taken it from Amirakadal from the famous tobacco seller. By God, what a good quality of tobacco, how can I express?"

Breesi smoked from the hookah a long puff and said, "Now there left five –three I gave to Khurshi which I had taken from her as debt"

"Yes" Khurshi the telltale was sitting there – she witnessed, "It is true. How can I deny? I have to die and be answerable. A little time before he came to me with rupees three.Do you understand?"

Breesi was pleased by the positive response from the Khurshi the tell tale and said " At last two rupees remained with me for one I bought the legs……" while saying this he glanced towards the Chulha and screamed, " Hey where is the couldron of legs"

Ashmi stood up on hearing the scream. She looked at the front and back of the chulha. She looked to the inbuilt-shelf and to the lobby. She started to look towards every nook and corner as if a needle was being searched. All the neighbours felt awkward. Some went speechless for the fear that they might be illegated.

Breesi was thinking as who the spirit had taken it from the chulha. He forgot all about the quarrel and said to Ashmi, “wasn’t it there on the chulha?” Ashmi had injured her finger and toe tips while searching for the couldron of legs.

She said to him, “haven’t you seen? It was there. Ho, who knocked down and died. Who has left with our couldron of legs? May devastation and destitution fell on him?”

Noora Kamal was thinking as to whose devilish act it could be. Who can do this? Suddenly he cried, “Hey, search for Gulla the flirty and take him here.”

Nabir Sheikh’s Rasul said, “I had already doubted on him earlier.”

When the both said this, all the neighbours rushed towards the Gula the flirty’s home and began calling him aloud from outside.

Gula the flirty’s mother came out of the window assuring repeatedly that Gulla hadn’t stolen it. How could Ashmi trust her? She raised the issue and made her involved in the quarrel on the way.

“You will eat the flesh of your beloved son if you eat our couldron of legs.”

Gula the flirty remained silent inside. But Breesi’s mouth leathered due to crying and abusing. The taste of the soup of the legs and marrow of the bones was flashing through his mind recurrently. At last when he got tired he held Ashmi’s hand and made her walk towards home.

“Hey, walk now. Let them eat and the almighty will not let us short off. It is shame for him that he lost his honesty.”

Late in the night when all were asleep in their own homes, Breesi was applying boiled turmeric paste to the forehead of Ashmi and saying, “then was I saying a lie that there should not

be quibble over the pennies in the home, by it the home gets bankrupt"

Ashmi replied, "How did Gula the flirty eat the couldron of legs? Let me substitute him from your ill fortune and sacrifice him instead of sheep for your sake.

About the writer: Akhter mohiuddin, one of the exponents of modern literature in Kashmiri language especially fiction and drama is a noted novelist, playwright and short story writer of Kashmiri language. He was born on 17 april in 1928 in lal bazaar Srinagar,J&K and lived there throughout the life. He left for heavenly abode in 2001.

Publications: Sath Sanger (short story collection) 1955, Sonzal in 1959,Vanun Ma Baniyam, Daud te dag(novel) Zuv te Zolana(novel) Jahanumukh Panun Panun Naar(novel) and two other short story collections published posthumously.

Awards: 1. Sahitya Academy award in 1958 2.Kala Kendra shield in 1975 3.Padam Shri in 1968.

POUND

Amin Kamil

I have an early familiarity with Dwarkanath. He and my father had been friends and companions for ten years. They were not only friends but bosom chums whose likes and dislikes were alike and both went through the thick and thin together. Till my father was alive, Dwarknath used to come to Narvora to meet him fortnightly or monthly. He used to do this even if he would be posted in a far off place as a station House officer. He respects me due to his friendship with my father and treats me as the closest of his loved ones .He doesn't even hide Zimni (daily dairy report) of the police station which is considered very confidential and secret document .Other little matters are inconsiderable.The day before yesterday I went to see him for a personal matter. Some days before that day there was a political upheaval in the city. Some people had disobeyed section 144 by assembling in the market and protesting against the government.

While talking I told Dwarkanath that it was right thing to arrest protesters as a part of professional duty but what the lawlessness it was that they entered the houses and dragged the innocent people out and put them behind bars. I told him that I knew ten to twenty persons who never put their legs in such itcshing clothes and tread in to such discomforting affairs. I asked him what they got in such ruthless and indiscriminate lathi-charge.

Dwarkanath hideously smiled with himself on listening to my remarks. After that he took out cigarette case from his pocket. He took out a cigarette for himself and other one handed to me and said, "It means you need explanations of your remarks. Good, listen."

Whatever Dwarkanath told me reminded me of an event, a story. It is minimum twenty six years old story. Those days there was Maharaja Hari singh`s rule in Kashmir. Now that rule had forty

seven plus ten, fifty seven and one i.e fifty eight. Yes the complete eleven years elapsed since Hari singh`s rule finished.

The incident occurred this way: it was ten in the morning and I was going to college. In the way at a place I saw some policemen pulling and nearly dragging the cows tied with tethers. Some women and their kids who were weeping and striking their bosoms were following them. A police man said to those women, “either you do not understand what we say or there seems to be some misfortune for you in store.”

“Hey, please see here. We are bowing before you.” The women were piteously saying, “for God`s sake set these cows free. We may substitute your misfortunes.”

“Sins of our own self” other policeman said to them angrily. “Perhaps you don’t believe that we will give you ten annas”

He said to other police man, “Hey, give them money in their hands so that their heart remains confident.”

The policeman handed money to the women but they didn’t take it. They were only beseeking and making requests for releasing the cows. I was confused that if these policemen are taking the cows to the pound for straying as per law, then why is there swearing and haggling in between women and police.Why and for what policemen are giving money to the women. I went near them and asked, “Hey what is the matter? Where are you taking these cows?”

“Basically the matter is nothing”, one of the policeman replied. “We have to put these cows in the pound. We assure these women that we will put these cows in the pound by one gate and you take them from the other gate instantly. However they will have to pay a fine and these ten annas we are giving out of our own pocket. The matter is very clear but these cattle owners do not understand us. Please make them understand on our behalf. Take these ten annas and give them the same.

Neither I took annas nor I helped the women to understand because I couldnot understand the matter myself. The cows are to be put in to the pound by the police but the police is giving the money for fine from their own pocket. Why so.what type of compulsion they have. If the policemen are feeling pity on the women then why aren't they releasing their cows? I once again asked them, "You are right. But why are you giving money for fine out of your own pockets?"

"Hey, what will we say" a policeman turned his face like an ill one and continued, "Yesterday, you might be aware that Maharaja Sahib came from Delhi in airplane. You know that the road from airport to Gupkar Royal Palace was closed. This usually happens whenever Maharaja has to go anywhere. And you know that not even the fly can go along or across the road till the Maharaja leaves. Yesterday there was police deployment on both the sides of the road as usual. Unfortunately when Maharaja reached beside the Silk House, two cows ran out of the street without any provocation and began to cross the road to go to the other side of the road. The policeman left no stone unturned to reverse the bad happening but they could do nothing. Maharaja had to stop his motor car till the cows left from there. Instantly Maharaja ordered DIG police that all those policemen who were deployed and were discharging the duty at the spot of incident should be suspended and at the same time he ordered that where ever there is any stray cow, it should be put in to the pound. In addition to it he ordered that any policeman who neglects this duty would be suspended. The police man added, "and we too have families.we cannot gamble with our means of livelihood for any others' sake.we too have to prove that we are discharging our duties responsibly. We didn't find anywhere any stray cow which we can put into the pound. Tshat is why we took the cows from their cow sheds, only to put them into the pound as a formality. Yes, now they have to pay ten annas as fine. We are giving these ten annas in advance from our own pocket. Now say what crooked thing we say to them."

I laughed on that day and on the day before yesterday too when Dwarkanath replied to me with such like something.

About the writer: Amin kaamil Born in 1924, was a resident of Kaprin, shopian later Srinagar held many leading responsibilities in J&K Academy of Art Culture and Languages by profession. Amin Kaamil is a renowned poet, literary critic, fiction writer, translator and editor in ashmiri language. He has a number of publications to his credit and is one of the pioneers in modernising Kashmiri literature.

Publications: Gati Manz Gaash (1958) Kathi Manz Kath(1966) lava Ta Prava(1965 Beyi Suyi Paan(1967)Padis Pod Tshay(1972), Yim Myani Sokhan(2009). He has been editor of sheeraza and Son Adab (State Cultural academy journals)

Awards: Sahitya Academy Award (1967) Padam Shri (2005).He has been awarded by J&k academy of art, culture and languages for his book ‘yim maeni sokhan’ in 2009.

Amin Kaamil stopped living on this earth from 30 October 2014.

The vacuum

Ali Mohammad lone

Vacuum: Endless and vast rather ever widening vacuum.

This vacuum has not existed in space outside the earth but in my heart and mind. That is the vacuum which can never be filled.

The rotation of day and night is a meaningless matter for me.

The day dawned. The light shone.

The dusk fell and the night ascended.

The day passed and the night finished too. What I have to do with it? I cannot think over any thing.

I am not an introvert but friends and companions complain that I am one because I cannot talk as they as they do.

Introvert! I come to laugh on this title. Not laughter in actual but slight smile that too of lips only. But still I remain utterly silent. When one cannot talk properly what other option he has instead of keeping mum. Among my kith and kin this rumour is now out that I talk once in response to a hundred talks. The elders decree that it is sagacity and wisdom while as youngsters taunt that it is arrogance.

When the intellect attains perfection, the speech turns brief. Partly learned say this and I reply all these remarks with smile. Not for that I want to satirize these remarks but because I do not know the logic behind my silence. Now, this vacuum, what will I do to it. It widens day by day to the extent that sometimes I feel that whole the universe is like an atom in it, even smaller than that. Who knows that? What name can be given to such a condition? It is raining today. The environment has cooled down. The people have taken out the t-shirts and are walking full

suited. But my vacuum is not influenced any way. Cold or Heat, be it inner or outer doesnot give it any movement.

When there isn't any emotion in the heart or mind, what is the significance of nature's such diversified expressions.what will happen to the vacuum? It will remain changeless there, sans sense, sans life, sans motion.

Will you tell me what the purpose of life is? Why I am? Why I am not? Thousands of books, after studying and learning hundreds of philosophies, I could not find answer to my question. I explored all the religions of the world and all the ideologies of it but my question still remains waiting for the answer.

I did not reach to any resolution that is why I feel my body, my existence, my being useless, aimless and lifeless.An automation or a robot has its own purpose.That too is manufactured for a purpose and fulfills that purpose.

What I am? Why I am? A Robot or a human.I never understood it. People get entangled in chains – the chains of business,the chains of family, the chains of society and get imprisoned in these chains.They go along the way of life with tireless paces like a horded ass and finally reach the destination. But what happened to me? I am as well imprisoned in the chains.Then why am I feeling myself free of them? Separate from them and aloof and alone. Is any body living with out these chains?

Going to office in the morning and coming back in the evening, eating food, listening to radio, reading newspaper, maintaining accounts of salt, oil, milk and vegetables…insuarance, g.p. fund, income tax, house rent, deaths and births, joys, sorrows- despite experiencing and enduring all these issues I feel myself free, lonely and limitless to the extent that I am fed up with this feeling. Even after disbelieving the existence of God, I wholeheartedly and involuntarily cry out "oh my God" on certain occasions.

Recently I faced an accident. I knocked down from bicycle during night. I screamed that time, “Oh my God.” But when people supported me to stand, I had no feeling in my heart, no emotion, neither of fear nor of tension nor of adventure.

When in the hospital I came near screening plant and doctor straightened my injured arm, I screamed of pain and a flush of sweat drenched me from head to toe. What the doctor diagnosed I couldnot understand. His hands trembled. He worried and said that perhaps there is a fracture. I happened to laugh on the anxiety of the doctor and he surprised. When I was put on to the table of x-ray machine and my arm was straightened, I screamed again and again.

The doctor said hesitatingly, “I think there are two fractures.”

I laughted a loud laughter and said, “Only two”

The doctor got teased and said, “Does it seem a fun to you? These bones will take atleast three months to heal.”

“Three months only”, I felt very unhappy on listening to this.

The doctor felt my head and asked, “Have you head injury as well?”

Now I kept mum. What would I say to this simpleton? The head would have injured if it had had the contents capable of thinking. The empty skull is not injured at all.

I got much more disappointed on seeing the x- ray film. The bones of the arm were alright. The doctor was happy and he said to me in professional language, “You are lucky- thank your stars.”

Oh! Alas

A rare opportunity it was in life; to remain away from the dull routine of day to day affairs. But due to bad luck, it slipped out of my hand. To imprison the arm in plaster and to lie down in

clean and tidy, white and warm bed is a romance which was not in my destiny and this simpleton doctor says, “Really you are very lucky. I congratulate you.”

Huh! Idiot

People have had the want of something, lack of some material object. To fulfill these things they finish their fuller life. But I haven’t any material want or any kind of such a lack. I have an inner want. I haven’t any emotion in my heart like fear, joy, sorrow, romance, love or hatred.

Wise people say that a human does not live by eating food only. Meals, air and water keep the body alive. But in this human body lives some other entity which also needs a variety of foods. Sometime before I was taking it true that is why I was reading books, writing short stories, acting in plays, listening to music and watching films, attending clubs and reading in assemblies, living together with people , play and laugh, weep and cry. But that was my past. My present is now going on with different perspectives and actions. Now I feel all this extravagant, absurd and nonsense. Book reading hollowed my mind. By writing the short stories, the short story of my own life turned complex and topsy-turvy. Play is an imitation that too un-understandable. Music turns one crazy. The films are purposeless. Going to clubs is showing off. To attend the assemblies, to laugh and play with friends is a formality. If you let me speak the truth, I feel living with the family a formality too.

I don’t know why?

I don’t know what I want? No, I don’t want any thing. But despite that sometimes this vacuum of my heart and mind comes to eat me and I want this vacuum to be filled any way. But what is here to fill it. Someone`s love? Someone`s affection? someone`s sympathy? Now if in the availability of all these things, this vacuum, this space cannot be filled. What can then be done to it?

Oh! Ho. I don't even get sbored.

Had I been bored, that too would have been an emotion which would have filled my vacuum any way.

Oh My God.

The hollowness of mind and heart! Has it any treatment or solution?

It may be raining. The environment might have cooled down. The desirable cool may have flowed. To sleep under a white pull over, it seems a luxury in this cold but to those who would be waiting for the daybreak. And he who has not this waiting in destiny, what can he do? Where will he go?

Oh this vacuum of mine! Might this vacuum be filled by any side, any way?

About the writer: Ali Mohammad Lone ,a novelist, playwright and short story writer of kasmiri, born in 1927 in Srinagar, J&kK. He held various positions in Radio Kashmir Srinagar and later he was entrusted with the responsibility of Deputy Secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of art, Culture and Languages.

Publications: 1.Asi Ti Chi Insaan (we too are humans): A famous novel.2. Suyya (A famous Drama translated in a number of Indian languages).3.Translation of Maxim Gorky's novel 'Mother'. 4. Viz Chi Saeny (drama) Taqdeersaaz (Drama)

Awards: Sahitya Academy Award 1972, Soviet Land Nehru Award.

Ali Mohammad Lone died on 22 December 1987.

The first lesson

Ratan lal shant

When he stepped into the village, he chanced to see his wrist watch. He stopped. Elongating his left hand, he scratched shoulder blades. His back was watery due to perspiration. He shook out dust from his boots and pantaloon upon which a layer of dust had accumulated. For many long hours he had been walking then. He left behind a tired and lone glance. He looked down to very far and found the road in the abundance of morning haze, dust and blue smoke, a withered dead snake skin. It had been a long time when that road left him. Along the mountain hill,through the grassy bushes,passes and rivulets, walking tiredly and treading the dust of desolate lands, an intention kept resolving in him that he would enlighten this backward area and secondly fill it with new hope. He thought that he had to live a roaming life along hills and borders for a long time but now perhaps he would live a secure and dignified life. He kept going on. By and by, his steps were welcomed by plain land. He thought that till noon he would have joined and the day would be counted.

He saw a man proceeding to him while he was walking. The man saluted him, lovingly held his hand and told him that they were just waiting for him. With the long steps of man, he dragged his tired and lifeless pair of legs.

Both of them entered in to a thatch roofed house. There was darkness like the moonless night in the room they entered. There were almost thirty men sitting silently and as if breathless around a coffin n the room whose windows and door were shut. He entered in to the room as well with out any enquiry and sat near the coffin as the space was free only there. Nobody saw towards him or say something to him. Not even the inhale or exale of breath was audible. He sat shrunk and huddled. He sat more shrunk in embarrassment.His hand touched the coffin and he screamed all of a sudden. By the by he began weeping aloud

and a shower of tears began rolling down his eyes. He wept for a long time.When his throat dried and he felt his head reeling, he kept mum. He rubbed his eyes. There was no body in the room now. He stood up and went out.

It was the time of dusk. He looked at towards all the four sides. He found no body any where, as if the whole village had desolated. He found no man or woman. Where did they go? He pondered over it. He shook his head which was hollowed due to weeping. His head was jingling like a jingle ball. He went out of the village and he saw somebody from a distance. He recognized his face. When the coming person saluted him, he in turn busied him in the talks. He thought that the day had already passed. Tomorrow the work should get completed early in the morning.

He asked him, "Brother, where is the school here. I have to join there."

"For what the school is to be given, sir.Should there be some child in the school going age or not? It has been six years since the sage of the mountain displeased with the village. … See yourself if you can find any boy of less than twelve or fifteen years of age. …"saying this he expressed grief for a long time. … How strange was this unknowing person of the morning?

After some time he kept on his speech, "Now it is the generosity of Sir Hagger that when he comes after four or five years, he says that he would get a school opened here. …Sir it should have been here! But a physician! Take the example of Hajji`s son. Had there been a physician, this single studying innocent boy of the village would not have died today. You think over it, sir. You think over it."

When in the morning he felt that his neck had crooked and his legs had a sensation of crawling of ants, he came to know that he had fallen asleep on the grass heap. He was unaware about how long the man had been addressing him. He got refreshed by a pleasing puff of breeze. He looked at the village in the half clear morning light. In a deep slumber, a perfect class….a school:

Thatch roofed huts, the grass stack, the paddy ricks, the trees and plants… He stood up, stretched his legs and arms, animated his features and started delivering to them, “Today I will tell you that our earth is not flat but spherical. It is just like a musk melon. The sun is staying at a place and our earth is rotating on its axis and revolving round the sun. You can do an experiment. Take a football and keep it in front of the light of a lamp (chirag). Its one side would be lighted and other side would be dark. Our days and nights change in the same way. In the same way the seasons change due to the revolution of the earth around the sun. Have you got it? Well done. In the same way if your meadows, these rivers, the grains to eat, the water to drink….o.k.Tell me the advantages of the forests?

The light of the sun began to fell straight in to his eyes and his sight impaired for a while.

In the morning hazy smoke, the road was perceptible clearly. It was far away. …And at the deep down.

About the writer: Professor (Dr) Rattan lal shant is a Kashmiri fiction writer (short story), playwright, translator, literary critic, editor and a Hindi poet.

Publications: Tshen (rupture) a collection of short stories.

Awards: Sahitya Academy Award 2007 for his book ‘Tshen’

For Ever in Love for You!

Shafi Shauq

Keep 'A' at the top of the triangle… sure. Yes, let him stay there…C is very scheming. Four years before, he has become the boss and since then enjoys the top position. To be true avarice is in human nature but it too has a limit. This B will irritate me. He has a symbiotic familiarity with the managers of studio. Keep him at his already occupied place. When the triangle will be fit, the quadrangle will be balanced and the circle will be perfect and complete. They suggest that I am free to turn upside down. Am I a simpleton! I have to complete my three years tenure."

"Hello, yes I am G M. Say, please! What can I do for you? …Sure. If not to your newspaper then to what! All the advertisements will be given to you. Of course, I will right now send you the report of today's function. I only wait the e-mail to open…Nothing is ok in Kashmir. The managers of BSNL have made a mess of everything. And this Rediffmail, may it burn. I will sign up Yahoo tomorrow surely…. My photo is a bit old. Put it in a big frame. It is my unique photo. There are some of my images on Facebook too. ..Thanks. It opened. Do receive the attachment… Have you received? I am very busy. She has to leave today. She hasn't packed up her luggage as yet… Let us talk in the evening. So leave. Good bye."

He has made a mess of everything. Nothing is in order … Ah! You hit me. The laptop was about to break into pieces …Why are you in such a hurry?"

GM Sahib shut it down and stood up. All over the room the smell of French scent had permeated everything; the cushions of sofa and even papers, the curtains and his suiting. GM was now allergic to such feminine scents. He didn't leave. It was now matter of a few hours. He had already endured for fifteen days. Now there were a few hours. He went to the window and peeped out through the window of his official residence. His glances rested on nothing...

“What are you seeing? It seems that the poet of your youth would enliven and rejuvenate again. There is something like that in the sceneries of this area.”

“ Yes … if there is the paradise on …”

please stop. This poetic line is now worn out and faded. Actually, the chill and the dryness are everywhere and greenery is yet to appear. Only a few deodar trees are there. Do you see how wide and long they are!”

“ Let the calamity fall on these deodars.”

GM sahib used to sigh now on mere mention of width and length. He left a long sigh and said, “If these trees were not state property, I would have got cut all these deodars. I like a wide lawn.”

“What wrong have these evergreen deodars done to you? It is your own laziness. After my leaving, you should go daily for a morning walk in the garden. You would see that you would never feel any problem then. You smoke cigarette after cigarette in this closed room. You should care for your health. Who is here to care about you? You left me in Delhi and admitted the children in boarding school. And you are unaccommodating and non-conformist in official matters. Don’t be careless. After sixty one should …”

“ My Pussy,stop now … oh … I am sorry … I mean Shugufta Ludhianvi, this is how people address you there outside the valley…”

“You said partly … Miss ShuguftaLudhianvi!” She kept her arm on his shoulder. GM sahib as well kept his arm on her back but it kept slipping down. Not because of weakness, but because she gradually withdrew herself. She disliked his smell. He was yet to take a bath.

“ Where has the crazy fellow gone? We should not be late. Already the airport remains packed with the people now. It has turned into a railway station. May these mean private flights be stopped for ever. Now even the Bihari labourers come in the airplanes.”

“ Where has this crazy young fellow gone to?” GM sahib

laughed all of a sudden. She was referring toDaraab as the crazy young fellow."

"If not the crazy young fellow then what else would I call him by? Majeed was his original name and now named himself Daraab.He does not even know the ABC of meter, yet he is Daraab sahib. Majeed wani, a Crazy young fellow. She uttered crazy young fellow affectionately. She uttered 'young' but said 'crazy fellow' inwardly.

"Don't tease him. The innocent man undertakes all types of responsibilities. Who other than him would have followed you? I neither have time to do so nor does it suit me in this age. Your age would be … perhaps. And you have an identical profession too."

"Crazy young fellow. He would be younger than me by almost four years. You have elevated him to senior manager otherwise the persons of his age are in pursuit of job only…crazy young fellow is very jocular. He even makes us listen to his non-vegetarian jokes as well. He feels no coyness nor is afraid of any one. The young girls always follow her. During the poetry recitation sessions, the girls request him for autographs. If I hadn't been always advising him, he would have fled away leaving his wife and two children."

" No, no .you should not let him do that. I have told him to send them his salary. His T.A and D.A is sufficient for himself. See, to talk of the Devil …. He is coming along with his attaché"

Miss ShuguftaLudhiyanvi peeped through the window. The shine of her face rekindled. Daraab was entering through the gate on other side of the lawn along with his heavy attaché. Security guards didn't help him. He opened the trolley of the attaché and drove it on the ground. There was noise like that of airport and the noise was audible even in the second story of the house.

" Tell me, have you kept all your things perfectly in order? Be sure that nothing is forgotten! I have got printed the copies of all your poems in the office. They are in that blue folder. I have as well saved them in pen drive and in CD too."

" Thank you, darling… This crazy fellow too has given me a soft

copy of the poems."
" I have kept 'MahiNav', 'Aajkal', and some issues of 'Biswin Sadi' in attaché. May be you will need them somewhere. The ghazals are always the same from over the time. Further, nobody cares about the quality of one's works. Do you remember how duly you were appreciated in the poetical recitation session of that international hall last year? You should remain obliged to me. This crazy fellow wasn't with you that time."
"Stop now. It happens on certain times. I didn't keep a person daily. Now to talk of inspiration …"
Daraab sahib voluntarily coughed from outside the door to make the inmates know that he was coming. However, the door was open. Wearing Addidas jeans, sky coloured high neck and blue coat he was fit to be loved by the fairies of other world.He had a reddish face, black hair as black as crow. In the grey eyes, he possessed a queer naughtiness; in his hand he was carrying an I-Phone.
GM sahib looked at him from the head to the toes.
"Good Morning Daraab sahib, you should have put on a warm jacket. It is very cold."
" Sir, the cold doesn't overtake me. And this cold is only till airport. After that there is warm weather everywhere. Sir, I request you to come too for a couple of weeks. Hyderabad is quite vibrant and heartening during winters."
" I am fine here. I have a suitable heating arrangement .Do I lack any thing here?"
GM sahib looked at Daraab sahib after peeping deep into his little eyes. Daraab sahib's lips bloomed to laugh.
GM sahib began saying in an elderly way, "Call me as soon as you reach Delhi. You will reach till eight o'clock in the evening. I will be very anxious till you reach to the flat in Gurgaon. I have kept everything there. Keep visiting her daily. These maidens are not credible."
"Thank you darling for everything", Shugufta said near dressing table while making layers of makeup paste on her face. She kept some things in the attaché and handed it over to Daraab. Daraab handled it so carefully as if it was a delicate thing.

“Sir, I am not too far from there; the fare of auto rickshaw is just rupees hundred, then there is metro too. This isn’t any difficult matter. I will be going to my own lodging late in evening. Babyjan was just phoning me. She said she will reach Gurgaon today.”

“She has a very intimate affection of your madam otherwise does a daughter ever accept a step-mother as his own mother?” GM sahib said while taking I-pad from the pocket and keeping it near the screen.

“ She is my most lovable friend. Despite her being four or five years younger than me, she calls me mummy.”

“ Sir, please don’t worry. I will go along with her to J.N.U.” Daraab said with confidence.

Shugufta looked at his secretive face, and Daraab left out of the room.

“ Now sit beside me for a moment. I love you Pussy. I will miss you. You will leave and enjoy but I will miss you always.”

“ I love you too darling. You are all alone.Don’t you feel bored?”

“ No, I love my loneliness ... and I haven’t leisure either. The employees would be coming in flocks now. They have innumerable problems. I have to destroy all the thorns of the last GM. He has grown innumerable thorns. I have to make plans for everything in my own way as everyone has his own conception, so I have. The people who added fuel to fire till recently are coming as applicants for justice.”

“Let them go to hell. What are you doing in evenings?” Shugufta sat near her on sofa but she was in a hurry to go. The boss took out his right hand from his warm gown quite hesitatingly. Then he could not decide what to do with the hand. Consequently, he put his hand on her shoulder. He was conscious of the fact that he might not mar her makeup.

“Don’t worry, my dear. I am fine. We already have made arrangements for the evening. You haven’t seen what lies in that cupboard, beside the wardrobe. In addition to it, I like to have music.”

“ I could not know how these thirteen days passed. Take it easy.

I will come back. Have I to take anything for you?"
" You know my tastes well.... take whatever you like. Till that winter would have finished. O.K.
The boss stood up and so did the madam.
" It is getting late. Now-a-days meeting a person is easy. Please be on the Skype once a week."
"I don't want to disturb your privacy, darling."
"Now don't embarrass me while leaving. I am too old now. It is my ripe age."
" Yes, I know ripe as well as right age ... for being naughty!"
" Leave now how long will the innocent guy wait for you? He might get chilled by the cold outside."
"He is not going to be harmed even by devil. He is an animal."
On hearing 'animal' GM was shocked and lost in some strange thoughts. Uttering 'animal' the boss turned to home theatre and switched it on. The madam had gone out of the room and she was descending the steps of the staircase. The boss followed her. He felt as if he had turned heavy in the warm clothes.
Darab had loaded all the attachés in the dickey of Innova car and was rubbing his hands in utter impatience, perhaps for warmth.
Madam sat on the middle seat and Darab sahib on the front seat. Taking the tickets from the pocket, he looked to it very carefully. The husband and wife aimed flying kisses to each other while leaving. The vehicle left, initially slowly then in third gear and consequently in fourth gear.s
WintyHoston was as if shrieking in the room.
"Prostitute! She isn't leaving me free even after being dead."
The boss turned music off. After lighting a long cigarette the boss began to keep all the things, which he had kept hidden for last two weeks, on their previous respective places.
Till late he was managing his room lonely as if he undefiled and purified it again.
About the writer: Shafi Shauq was born 1950 at Kaprin, ShopianJ&k and is presently living at Chandpora, Harwan Srinagar J&K. He is a poet, literary critic, translator, fiction writer and linguist. He was a professor in Kashmir University and retired as Dean Faculty of Arts in 2010.

Publications: He has authored nearly fifty books in Kashmiri, Hindi, Urdu and English. Kaeshri zaban ti Adbuk Tawareekh (History of Kashmiri language and literature) is his most significant achievement which he accomplished along with NajiMunawar. He has written scripts and screen plays for nearly sixty television films and serials. Prof. Shauq is associated with several national academic and literary projects like Encyclopaedia of the Indian Literature, Medieval Indian Literature and Oxford companion to Indian Theatre etc.

Awards: Prof. ShafiShauq has received various awards. Some of which are; Best book award in 1982, Sahitya Academy Award in Creative Writing in 2006, Bharti Bhasha Saman Award in 2007, Sahitya Academy translation Award in 2007, Life Time Achievement Award by J&k govt in 2016.

Literary tours: Prof. Shafi Shauq was a member of Indian writers' delegation Sent to Peoples Republic of China by Sahitya Academy in 2002. He was guest of honour at Frankfurt Book Fair 2006 in Germany. He represented India at London Book Festival 2009 on the invitation of British Council.

FANTASY

GULSHAN MAJEED

God knows what is the fact? Fantasy is that a shoe dropped in Lal Chowk. The person from whom it dropped was driven away by the mob. It was seen by a child. Before that his mother would pull his hand and make him cross the road,he put one of his feet in it but only after three or four steps, it slipped out of his foot. It was then seen by a dog that scared away from other side and fetched it to the side of the road where I was standing. More …More I saw and thought.

Majja pulled the edge of the head-scarf of his mother and said "oh mother! Here is a shoe." Mother was lost in something. Majja glanced back, saw the shoe piece in the dog`s mouth and said, "oh mother, there is dog."

"Your father has been a challenge to me". Mother was in her own worries and she pulled him by the arm.

"But I feel thirsty" son said.

Mother made no reply.

"Had I picked that shoe?" Son exclaimed.

Mother replied, "Let the boots fell on your intellect. How can the waters taps be here?"

The son said, "if I had picked that shoe and……."

"I will deshape your nose by the same shoe." Mother said,

"Which shoe are you reffering to?"

The Chinese angel seated on the left shoulder of Majja wrote: The Kashmiri people are senseless and they are chewed up by

the internal worries and assignments. The Chinese angel seated on the right shoulder of Majja wrote: the Kashmiri people are easily terrified and skeptic. They are attentive to their own interests."

When Majja reached the spot of the shoe at Lal Chowk along with his mother, the sweeper had put all the garbage of the road into the wide-willow basket and the boot was on its top.

It was certain that Qadir gram would be interrogated and teased today awkwardly but majja enjoyed chewing gram silently.

"The shoe is new yet. May I replace the calamities of Majja. The sole of the shoe would be used to the shoe of Majja`s father. See, in what chaos it has to undergo. The lace of it would be required by Majja the bonny himself." mother thought.

The busyness and the immediacy were at their highest. The procession was about to reach Lal chowk.

"Oh hey, Let this boot be mine."

"Hey, this is the boot of my son."

The sweeper lifted the wide willow basket and crossed it to the other side of the road.as soon as Majja glanced towards his mother, the slogans of the procession reached into the street. Majja could not cross the road.

The people started chanting the slogans loudly. The shoe piece in the basket on the other side of the road was as if elongating its arms to embrace Majja.

Majja thought "Qadir gram would be on the shop yet. Had mother agreed to me at the first instance, I would have eaten the gram to the full. But I would get nothing out of this."

It seemed to mother that the shoe piece is slipping out of their hands. Mother thought, "Bonny had shown me in black and white at the initial stage. I would have reached home. Majja`s

father would be enraged. The same shoe pieceWould I put in his mouth, if he raises his voice and awakes the neighbours."

Before that policeman or any other would move from his place, Majja rushed across the road. Fortunately the shoe piece was on the wide basket as it was before.Majja glancsed to mother. With a smiling face, mother beckoned him to remain there.

Mother thought, "Abil the cobbler is the best master to change the sole however he takes too much time to do the job.

The procession was nearing. The people huddled together and resorted to pushing for space. A skinny dog at the shop scared and fled away across the road. The people on the side of the road clapped their hands and compelled the dog to fled back. The people had a fun. An onlooker snatched the shoe piece from Majja`s left armpit and aimed at the dog but it missed the dog and struck on the head of the policemen who had reached near the dog simultaneously. The turban and its adorning things fell on the street and the people laughed a loud laughter. Majja felt as if he was strangulated.

Mother`s eyes bulged out and she thought, "the son of such a senseless and lifeless father who would have raised hue and cry there.Home bully."

The Chinese angel on the right shoulder of Majja wrote: the Kashmiri people are cheerful. They make fun out of everything. The Chinese angel on the left shoulder of Majja wrote: the Kashmiri people have a little collective conscious. Politically they can be hypnotized by any art of jugglery.

Majja couldnot see towards his mother. The procession began to pass in front of him. The green and the red slogans, the loud and the feeble cries were making an entertaining atmosphere. There seemed to him mere grams all over the road.

Mother identified Majja`s father out of the procession.

“What do you search upwards, raising your arms? It is down on the ground.” But she couldnot give voice to it. She knew how furious he was. She thought, by calling aloud, she would lose her dignity for nothing.

Majja thought that the shoe piece would have been dragged to the ground however it would not lose its weight….

The procession kept going on. Mother thought, “The shoe piece would have been deshaped by trampling but its sole would be intact? I am in need of mere the sole.”

“The bonny Majja had warned me on time but alas! I did not pay heed to him. At the onset the procession had to get desolated on the same day too. Unfortunate is overtaken by miseries recurringly.”

Majja didn`t watch the procession as he was shrunk on a corner of a wall. Sweat was dripping from him. He thought, “Never did mother let me live aright. Had I been alone, I would have reached home along with the shoe piece.”

About thw writer: Prof Gulshan Majeed is a poet , critic and short story writer. He is director Central Asian Studies, Kashmir University.

Publications in Kashmiri:

1. Naqd Shaar (criticism)
2. Bulbul Nowgami
3. Gulbakawali by Lass Khan Fida edited by Prof Gulshan Majeed.

Publications in English:

1. Kashmir to Central Asia
2. Central Asia... abrief history
3. Aspects of folklore
4. Emergence of Central Asia
5. Approach to Kashmir study.

In addition to it he is editor general of CCAS, editor of journal of Kashmir studies. He is a member of advisory board Gyanpith, Birla foundation and Sahitya academy.

The final decision

Veerinder patwari

Old man opened the window and began to narrate the situation of outside once again. He was lovingly surrounded by the children and grand children who were listening to him so intently as if the old man was narrating the tale of a king.

Old woman had no interest in listening to the old man. Holding a baby in lap she was seated on the verandah, fallen in some thoughts and was gazing towards the distant sea as if somebody was to come and she was waiting for him.

“Is it about to finish?” the children said to the old man.

“No” the old man sighed and said that the quarrel is going on now. Both want to break each others pride. As soon as they strike each other, the sky gets trembled. And it seems as if the lofty mountains break in to pieces due to the earthquake.

“Finally who would win” the children asked once again. The old man got silent. He was himself at sixes and sevens. He could not comprehend as to who would win and who would lose.Both were injured but they kept on quarrelling out of arrogance.

“What are you too much proud of?”

“Who are you to show me your power?”

“I warn you to hold your tongue.”

“I will drag you”

“Ha ha……ha ha”

“Ha ha……ha ha”

“I feel pity on your youth”

“To have mercy on your old age is to give milk to a snak.” While saying this they pounced upon each other like Rustom and Sohrab.

With swords

With arrows

Upon horses

Upon camels

Upon elephants

Embroidered and armoured

In the battle field of Kurukshetra

In the battle field of Panipat

In the battle fields

On the sand dunes

Marine war

Air war

Mahabarat, kalinga, Waterloo and world war

They lifted the gun

Thay used the canons and kept trying to overcome each other.

The old man was still puzzled that in favour of whom he would give his decision. And the old woman was silently gazing towards the sea as she used to.

They remained changing their dresses. The plans to overcome each other kept devising. The strategies of war kept changing. The war did not decline.It kept going on. The both began to

rupture the clothes of each other and hence got stripped. The old man broke into a laughter because both were naked before him…stark naked. To hide their naked self, they spread the darkness of falsity. On every side they put the trap of the hatred and started quarrelling again on the basis of religion and caste. Making scapegoats of the helpless people, both of them attacked each other from behind the shrubs.

The children kept listening and the old man went on Narrating whatever he saw. They went out of the shrubs and secretly entered into the each others homes. They kept dressing themselves afresh and went on cutting each other by hidden sickles. However along with this they kept the dialogue going on. One became a learned man and other a traveler. After that both left the battlefield and went into the room.

The old by breathed out with calm and began listening to the conversation of the two. Both of them started resolving the issues and regretting the desolation.

They were misleading each other by sweet talks and used to say, "Nothing would happen by this. Better is that you agree that you are a sheep and I am a tiger rather a lion …… see my teeth."

"You are not a tiger. You are a cat and I am a dog. . . . Not a dog of streets but a hound. . . . See how I wrinkle my moustaches"

"What would happen by wrinkling these too less strands of the moustache hair? A mouse has much longer moustache than you have."

The ridiculed him, "you does not even seem a mouse to me however if you are a one, what can you do. Ho, small rat."

"Really. . . . . I am a small rat who internally hollows the big bungalows."

"And I swallow such rats by becoming a snake."

“And I am that mongoose who at the onset cuts the head of the snakes and then drags them along the ground.”

Both of them remained busy in laughing, talking silently and frightening each other.

The mutual trust broke down and it dispersed like a fist of sand. “Then it should be decided after fighting.”Both of them stood up shook their hands and left.

The old man saw that they had again changed their clothes.

Both were in the guise of the magicians. One was rubbing a lamp (chirag). Other was licking a ring on finger. And they were ordering their ghosts in their rooms. One of the ghosts was terrestrial and other one was aquatic.

One elongated his eye and saw in to the room of the other while as the second one elongated his ears and kept hearing all the talks of enemy.

One blew air and raised the storm

Other breathed out and spread fire on all sides

One incanted and became an elephant

Other incanted and became a flea.

The elephant shook himself, became an insect and hid himself in the garbage to eat the flea. The flea turned himself in to a cock and began to search for something in the garbage. On seeing this, the insect became a pearl and remained attentive to look for a chance to perish his enemy.

The old man was in shock and uncertainty rather in tension. The old woman shocked too. Not because she listened to the old man but because she saw a ship far away in the sea proceeding to her.The children were listening to this story entertainingly as if

some king's tale was being narrated to them.The young man and woman were seeing to the old man eagerly with keen eyes.

The old man knew that the pearl which the cock eats is explosive in reality. However the cock kept on eating the pearls with pleasure. The cock`s belly strained. He shook and turned himself into a human being. The pearls in his belly exploded and people were killed.

The war started once again. Instead of fire crackers there were explosions of bombs. On seeing this, the old man recollected the world war second. Would the same happen to us that happened to the city of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? The pearl became a human once again.

"It is a fatal lightening. It is a divine calamity", the old man screamed.

"No. …it is a human calamity", the old woman replied.

The young man shouted, "Is it the world war?"

However the little children being huddled to each other listened intently.

"Ten lakh people died due to war." A flying cry reached into the room and all the men and woman dreaded. "Till date twenty four lakh people died in the war. …No …No …Ten trillion ten lakh. No …No, it seems no one is left anywhere.The villages are destroyed.The cities are destroyed. Whole the country is finished in such a way as if it was non-existent. Neither the kingdom remained nor the king. To bury or to cremate the dead bodies, there remained no one. Every where there was either black soil or fire.

At last who has won, Kauravas or Pandavas, Hitler or Stalin, Russia or America, Hindustan or Pakistan? The old man sighed however the old woman screamed.

“Get up. …get up, it is late …He came … He reached to the shore”, while saying this, the old woman seized two children- a girl and a boy and ran away.

“Where we have to go?” the children said to the old woman. The old woman didn’t reply. She ran away and met the caravan. There were swallows, mynas, horses and cattle, lion and sheep collectively towards the shore and trying to occupy the space in the boat. The old man kept watching the caravan and thought, “how is it possible that God`s creation is still breathing in such a calamity.”

He had only the smoke all around. He shouted his last scream however no reply was given from anywhere. Actually all had followed the old woman and left. It was her decision and the final decision of God too.

About the writer: Veerander patwari born on 11 September 1940 original resident of Ganesh Ghat Srinagar, J&K, now lives in 102 Deluxe Apartments, Wasundra Enclave, Delhi 96. Veerander, by profession an engineer, writes in Urdu as well as in Kashmiri. Veerander ji writes fiction and drama. His publications in Urdu are ‘firishte khamosh hain’, ‘dosri kiran’, ‘ek adhoori kahani’, ‘aakhri din’ etc. His lone Kashmiri short story anthology is ‘Alam’.

Ask Dear Son, Ask

Rasheed Sarshar

"Dear son. Hold my hand." while giving her hand old ma saw towards me with piteous glances. I felt entangled while entering the bus stand but gave a hand to her.

The passengers were huddled together in the bus. All were longing to reach their destinations, even before being late.

However when I took down old ma from the bus, she turned back and said, "Get down I am here. Be cautious. Let not your foot slip away."

She was casting a glance at me and the other at the tense and hopeless old man who was handling the door of the bus. His crutch was touching the ground despite his attempts and as such he was not able to figure out where to land his foot. This was apparent because he was advancing his foot and taking it back again and again.

The conductor of the bus was perplexed in the hub-bub of passengers. He was pleasing some by giving back the balances but querelling with some and listening to the abuses. They were even pouncing on each other.

I had to get down the old man from the bus by shouldering him. I kept him beside the old ma and went deep in to my being. Due to the dark fortnight, the darkness had early in the evening eroded away the faces of the ways. Due to the darkness the directions to the nests would drop from the minds and dissuade the passengers.

The people were coming and going however without raising their eyes to anybody, the passengers laden with their bag and baggage were hurriedly going to their destinations. I was at sixes and sevens standing between the old couple. Neither my foot could move on nor could I turn my back towards this innocent

old couple. The old couple was as if fallen from the sky or erupted from the Sheol. This clipped winged couple was wearing the long white cotton pherans (outer gowns) to their knees. The moon light washed hairs shinned as if they were godly informers. They were disheveling in the hussle and bussle as if they were devoid the living features.

“You will come with me.” Beckoning towards taxi driver, I said to them, “you cannot reach to your lodge now. “Dear son, which lodge we have! If we reach to any shrine, we will pass the night there peacefully,”

If we get some charity well, if not it doesn’t matter. Along life we had been eating.

I broke down! As if somebody hit me with sword by both the hands. My eyelids filled with the tears, “No, it should not be said. He is your son if you don’t go along with him, come along with me.”

After getting down from the taxi, driver was saying while supporting the oldma, “Whatever leaves after your eating that would suit us to eat.”

“Hundreds of times we praise the God.” I too said while supporting the old man. With the right hand I was swiping the tears of my eyes.

All the obstacles of the otherness had ragged. While talking we were laughing, replying and listening to replies. We were asking each other the questions of different sorts. By inviting and saluting we were planning the rough surface of the way of relationship. However my mind was sometimes failing to comprehend. I felt pained when I recollected my landlady. My landlady’s temperament is eccentric, too much eccentric. The oldmen whose beard and hair greys, are despised by her. Her husband is doing a job at a far off place where he lives as a renter. When he comes to home after two and a half months, she herself mixes a bowl of black hair dye and blackens his long

grey hair like the colour of a black crow.Then she becomes so happy as if she had gets the riches. Long and black hair is admired by her.

"I abandoned my father-in-law and mother-in-law due their grey hair. I vomit when I see it." She often says with pride. "The grey hair breaks me down." That is why I have kept long hair. I apply hair dye. Even after that if I find grey hair in the mirror, I selectively take it out.

The driver had switched on the bulb of the taxi. The raindrops had started pouring. The street had been splashed. The coldness was being felt as it was autumn season. It was very late on reaching the lodge. In the electric light the rain drop had spreaded the collection of pearls on the grassy ground. In the Syed sahib's mosque reverberating sounds of holy blessing were illuminating the darkness of negligence and on the other side the melodious recitation of devotional songs from the temple of mother was satiating the thirst of the souls.

I opened the board of the door slowly and silently. My landlady did not like the loud creaking of the door. As soon as we entered the room, the old couple began fondling the walls. Gazing upon the figures and pictures and talking aloud. I said to them, "what are you seeing?" These are pictures."

"No dear son. These are not mere pictures. There is our imagination of Iife in them. Here we smell the scent of ownness." They said. We did not see when the old ma had sat after getting tired. But the old man who was fondling the figures and images by her hands, was saying such things which were not understood by me. He was wandering like a butterfly from wall to wall. He was saying, "This is Tolstoy- saintly writer who left imperial throne and adopted destitution. This is the chairman Mao Ze Dong who educated his nation the meaning of the idea of living. His nation was till that living a life of curse. This is Josh, Faiz, Gourki, Iqbal, Tagore, Mehjoor, Azad, dear son. These are the personalities who aroused consciousness of

humanity along with patriotism and Nationalism in us. He was suffocating but not tiring. I wondered. While wiping a framed picture by her hand he was more pleased to express. He said aloud, “Ask dear son, ask….who he is? I will reply…. He is the person who gave us ideological capability- who showed the hunger-stricken and aimless people the new style of living. He was very far from us, speaking a different language but our soul could understand the meaning of his words.” He was speaking fluently as a nightingale sings but I could not understand the most of it.

“Yes, the farmer got right over land and harvet and weaver got its own shop which was taken over forcefully by the evil minded who feigned to be his own. Then he said, “Have-not is a means of income for Have and merely a sole of a shoe. The sole of such a shoe piece which turns useless due to rupture and is thrown into a dirty drain when it ruptures. Do you listen? We were toiling hard in spring and summer and in autumn. Before tasting even the boiled rice water of new harvest, we used to go out of the Pir Panchal. We would fall down from the mountains in order to earn some pennies. Those who remained here used to chew the rice-bran cakes due to which their mouth and lips bleeded. They used to drink the huge sips of milkless tea weaving the grass mates and the grass seats layer by layer. They used to sigh and shed tears consoling themselves and their family members by praising the Graciousness of Almighty.

“New harvest, rice-bran cakes, boiled rice water... I don`t understand anything.” I said to him.

“It was such a law that our mortars and pestles and even small stone pestles used to be sealed by government inspectors and land tenants. To handle these tools was a crime then. Chicken and maize cobs were counted then.” Saying this he broke into tears.

He took his shirt off from his back. The signs which landlords whipping had imprinted on his back were visible. I came to know that he was whiped as he had cut-nailed a maize cob.

"Now we are free" He said, "but, dear son, there was a dead body of an old man hanging onto the electric pole in the street. The face was defaced. His clothes were taken out and the trousers were ruptured and ragged. The people whispered that the man was condemned for trying to save her daughter`s virginity."

There was pain and expression of hopelessness in his information.

He further added, "Unscarfed and bare footed daughter and wife were shedding tears which were sufficient to put off the fire of the hell. It is said that they were prohibited to cry in the morning. Then isn't it said nonseriously, "destitute got freedom as well." He said without any pause.

On hearing 'abba abba', we turned to old Ma. She was wiping tears from her eyes. She was laughing too. My landlady was supporting her to stand aright. Old Ma's grey hair had stuck to her lips and chin. I wondered.

"Ask, dear son ask" she said as if from the sky, awakening those in deep slumber on the earth, "here is our good odour: the scent of emotions. She is my daughter in law, my daughter, life giver to my lineage, my solace.

In the room there was the reverberating voice of old Ma or the tearfull sobs of my landlady.

About the writer: Rasheed Sarshar is a prominent writer in Kashmiri language. He is a poet, critic and fiction writer. He resides at Wangam shopian.

Publications:1. Aasia; translation of Russian novel of Turganev, along with Shahzada Rafeeq 2. Manush bal; a collection of

essays of literary criticism. 3. Fikir ti fun- literary criticism anthology.

In addition to it he is a regular contributer to a number of literary magazines like Maraz, Wyethi Aagur, Saqafat, Sheeraza etc.

THIS STORY IS NOT TRUE

Rasheed Raashid

Both the hands of Granny were busy. The right one was in the pocket of pheran turning some beads. From outside it figured that she had an incanting string of beads in her hand. And the left one was hanging on left knee and it was having movements like that of right hand. Due to this movement, the veins on her left hand were swelled up. It was partly due to her oldage and partly due to the task. Her lips were closed and she was silent. The active were her eyes and she was gazing towards the door-board. This was the usual practice for Granny especially when the goddess of loneliness used to dance in front of her. During the dance the white cat Azee used to sit on the elongated skirt of her pheran. Azee was mewing on the pheran and this was a source of pleasure for Granny.

Granny's both the sons and daughters-in-law used to leave early in the morning after taking tea. They used to return late in the evening to see the silent Granny in the same condition as they had left her in the morning. However during the day whenever her pleasure reached the climax, she used to caress the white cat Azee and tell her the story. Azee wasn't replying her any way. Azee wasn't even asking Granny whether the story had a climax or what happened then. The fact is that Azee was on certain times feeling perturbed on comphrending the climax of the story or the suspense in it. This used to happen especially when, during the story, Granny would reach to the event of Nagiroy's (the snake king) sinking in the milk tub. Azee, on such times, used to look towards the Granny with inquisitive eyes. Whenever the Granny forgot the story, she used to gaze at the door. Azee used to listen the stories from Granny which were with such climaxs that bored it and as such it would fell asleep. Granny would caress it to deepen its sleep to slumber. Younger daughter in law Saleema one day arrived home earlier in the evening. The heat of the day had ebbed down. Saleema peeped at the Granny through the door crevice. She found her telling

Azee the story of white and black cats. That time all the strands of the fur of the cat were erected as it was very keen and attentive to the story.

The daughter in law went straight to the kitchen and remained busy in the work. Granny would never leave out of the house in the absence of family members. Due to that the door would keep the condition in the evenings which it had in the mornings. The daughter in law was in search of a cool place as her face had blushed crimson due to the engagements in front of open burning hearth. She was drenched with sweat so optimally that frock had sticked to the body. On the other hand Azee had somehow managed to save herself from Granny's glances. It had hideously ascended to the loft so that it could free herself after a long day of exhaustion. Azee was sympathetic to the black cat for the injustice faced by it. However Azee was feeling proud when it was relating itself and its colour to the white cat and its event of bourgeoisie tendency. That is why it was elongating her tail towards the room and hopping in joy for soothing her hot sweat. When Saleema reached to the loft she saw Azee's hopping and elongating condition. Saleema cried to her, "Azee is very happy today" Azee looks towards Saleema and blushingly left behind the firewood logs. Azee longed to say to her, "today Granny made me listen such a story which was mine and only mine" however it could not tell her. However Saleema figured what the case might be. Saleema left back without disturbing Azee and headed towards the room of Granny. One of the two boards of door was wide open. She pulled her clothes to loosen from body. After that she swiped her face by both the hands in order to lessen the blushing. Afterwards she entered the room where the Granny was as usual whispering. Granny's right hand was in pocket and left hand as usual seemed to be turning the beeds on the strings. Her younger son had earlier returned from his duty. He was sitting away from the Granny after changing clothes. He was waiting Saleema who had to serve him tea. He was neither finding joy nor sorrow over the involuntary movements of the hands of Granny. Helplessly he was relaxing in a corner and just waiting for tea and his brother. Granny was

not either feeling disturbed by their arrival. She was keeping her activity going on contently. She used to to advise Azee to ascend to the loft before the arrival of Javaid as till that she had had her story finished. As Saleema opened the second board of the door, Granny stopped her work. After seeing Salima, she saw javaid had come back.

Granny said, “Javaid, you have come back from duty. Now you don’t let me know.”

Javid didn’t reply to this however he gestured Saleema by his hand for taking tea. As soon as Saleema was about to go back, Granny said to her, “where has Azee gone.”

While closing a board of the door Salima replid, “Granny, Azee is very happy today. It was hopping on the loft as if it has listened to the best story today.”

On listening to this Granny felt utterly desirous to see Azee. “Javaid, call Azee. I will see how much happy it is”Granny said. Javaid stood up without replying and ascended the stairs to the left and called out Azee. Azee was at that time left out from behind the firewood logs. It had erected her tail and exhibiting delight on thinking over the performance of the white cat.

Azee rushed to Granny on listening to the call from javaid. While Javaid was deciding whether to go in to the kitchen or into the room, Granny called him in.He had to go in and sat in the same corner where he was before.Granny felt happy on seeing the joy of Azee and she inadvertently spoke out, “Azee,you are very beautiful.”

What would Azee reply other than uttering mew. Granny turned to Javid and said, “Javid, come near. Hasn’t Saleema taken tea yet? Preferingly she would be filling her own belly by tasting the sugar.”

On listening to this Javid went hot under the collar but he could say nothing.

Granny said again, “Javaid, do you know how happy Azee is today. Today I told her a story of cats. Where did your Saleema go? But oh! Hasn’t she taken tea yet? May she take it soon? I would tell you the story. This is a short story.”

Javaid was embarrassed because he knew that Granny would not let them leave without listening to the story but he remained motionless in front of her and didn’t even speak back.

With out looking towards Javaid Granny started, “it is being said that once in the ancient era the black cats were exiled from the country. The black cats were considered inauspicious.”

Javaid turned his head away on finding that once again the same stereotypical stories which they were accustomed to listen, would be narrated by Granny. With out noticing the reaction of Javaid, Granny continued her story thus, “that is why this caste of cats was exiled and they settled in a separate habitation. After some time the white cats started going there and developed access to them. Consequently the white cats started ruling them. The black cats were not allowed to go to the country of white cats which was their homeland earlier.”

Listening to the story to that point Azee came in front of Granny. Azee supported herself on front legs and gazed to Granny. Azee might tell her, “Granny, why have you changed the story. Didn’t you tell just some time before that one day a black cat visited that country and it was welcomed and respected by the white cats of that country. But when the female white cats understood whole the plan behind arrival of black cat, they at once drew it out of the country. At that time the black cat had grey kittens following it.”

Azee merely remained mewing in front of Granny.

Javaid interrupted the Granny’s story and said, “Granny, what is wrong with Azee. It is making much more noise.”

Azee could not endure this disrespecting remark. It at once bounced and rushed towards the loft. Granny had stopped her story as she understood and felt the bouncing of Azee. She at once stood up forcefully and ran after her calling it again and again.

About the author: Rashid Raashid hails from Drusoo district pulwama.J&K. He is a poet, critic, fiction writer and translator.

Publications: 1. A book of literary criticism ‘Ani Gati Waninum’ in co-authorship with Basher Bashir. 2. An anthology of Kashmiri short stories ‘Safar Dar Safar’. In addition to it the short stories, poetry, and literary criticism publishes in a number of journals like Maraz, Pravv, Sheeraz etc.

The Mark

Gulam Nabi Shakir

While I was going to office in the morning today, from a distance I saw her walking in a fleeing attitude. She was going with hurried steps and without seeing towards left or right. She proceeded forward, as if lightning whizzed before my eyes. Even after recognizing her on seeing her shape and figure, it seemed to me that I vaguely recognized her .I thought to myself "Is it she?"I got a little humiliated as if my own self seemed strange to me.

"What does it mean 'is it she?'It is she really and actually. I again glanced at her after wiping my eyes. She had left away but her back shadow was perceived by me. It was really she. I recognized her clearly. Her gait and shadow flashed with in me.

A forgotten matter, although not ignored one, got recollected to me as if I went out of the imaginary and dreamy world and reached into the real world; as if after a long time I got the thing which had slipped out of my hand. What my life is short of would very often irritate me. I failed to understand the difficulty which irritates me time and again. Despite having everything, I felt as if I have nothing.

A beautiful, intelligent and affectionate wife amid a job of three hundred rupees I have. Two lovable, affectionate and grief allaying children who with their innocent talks and loving attitude take me far away from the sorrow and grief to such a happy world where all the pains and sorrows are healed as soon as snow melts in the sun.

How many virtues of my wife would I count? Whenever this idea strikes my mind I pray to my lord with a humble heart that not someon like her but only she ought to be my wife in the next life. God knows better which good deed I have done that such a wife I destined.

I recollect those days when I was jobless. Not even half a penny used to be in my pocket. However those were the loving days. She had limitless desires and I too had had a human heart. I used to think with myself “had I not been a destitute? Had I not been entangled in the joblessness? What a number of beautiful things are on sale in the market. Won’t they suit my wife?”

However, my wife auguring the future in those days of destitution used to say “richness and poverty are transitory as the sun and the shadow. What do you think? These days would not remain so either.”

I thought that my wife should not have been a destitute. She should have what suits her. My intellect was weak as I was hopeless regarding future. She had certitude of what I have today. Consoling my heart those days and walking happily with me hand in hand while beheading her desires, she bought and owned my heart in total. I became her and she became mine. Today whatever I have got, she is a partner to it: partnr of my sorrows as well as of my joys. Being aware of all that, I don`t know why I have a hideous urge. And either I don`t know what the pain I endure. A number of times I asked my self but it had no reply. I thought, watched my fancies, wandered in the wastelands of my heart and found them dry and stony. The heart was hopeless and grief-striken.

I stayed in the talkative atmosphere of my children but alas! They either could not console me. After deep exhaustion when I reached home, my wife massaged my feet. She saw me with her young and intoxicating eyes. She kept the moisture of heart and love of soul at my disposal. She kept the intoxication of her youth and the sources of her beauty open lided for me. Despite having all this at my disposal, I usually felt hideous urge and felt that I have forgot something at somewhere.

The children were born and the life sustained normally. The days turned and the changes occurred. Despite all this I could not forget the fact that when Sheela was young, we jointly used to

play wazwaan (the community feast cooking). We used to play marriage and family. She used to become a bride and I a groom. Sometimes she used to become a mother and I a father. I still have those moments in front of my glances.

Sheela's innocent eyes were impregnated with coyness but in these eyes there was such an enlightenment of the future of which perhaps I still have hideous urge.

Her innocent but naughty eyes would easily and naturally develop the depth of the ocean and fluidity of honey. Her morning breeze like youth hidden behind the seven veils was trying its youthful and beautiful shines upon me. Perhaps that is why I have that hideous urge and I feel my life incomplete. Whenever I see lovingly towards my wife, I have to give her the incarnation of Sheela. After that I feel that she is my wife.

Today I saw Sheela walking by here after a long time. I thought to myself that she would have come here changed. A strange and unique wave of joy flowed throughout my body as if some body strengthened and enlivened my life; as if the star went out of the darkness and began to shine. Sheela's single glance and a wholy visual perception of her beautiful looks is a panacea for my lacs of sorrows. I experienced this feeling today.

About the Writer: Ghulam Nabi Bhat Pen Name: Gh Nabi Shakir born July 1937 and resides at Chandapora, Harwan Srinagar.

Publications: 1. 'Adam Ti Hawah' –collection of Kashmiri short stories.

The turn of era

Ratan lal Jowher

The road was same and the only alteration was that it was wider than what it was four years before.The reality that the chinars which were on the sides of the road were nowhere. There was only a single chinar having its parts cut and spread on the ground. The other chinar was lifeless and bare like a skeleton in a laboratory, standing amid the road to make the people going on foot, those going fast in taxis, the passengers staying on the decks of the buses, the cyclists along with lunch boxes going to offices and work places and those bosses who were riding in flaged cars which are proceeded in the run by the jeeps with sirens appreciate the nature and existence of past era.

He was going on the big road after four years because he hadn't got the leisure time in these years to go city from the village. He had nearly fled from the city to the village because of ever deepening selfishness, show off, hollow emotions, the stinking smell of water of Jehlum river, the ever unsunned yard, the boredom of hourly waiting at ration, coal and firewood depots and the same at super markets for cooking oil, the adultered milk and the breath choking smell of the incoming air through iron barred windows. He wanted to live at such a place where there would be the wide reaching sun, pure and hygienic milk, pest less and pebble less Kashmiri rice, the ear soothing bird chirping, stress disburdening green meadows, the willow shallows and nectar like stream and spring water. He had fulfilled this desire by selling his part of house in the city to his brother and buying ten canals of land and a kutcha house in the village.

To be true, he was now imprisoned in the village as he was in the city. The image of the village that he had in mind in the city had dismantled in these four years of living there. This was because every part of the village, whether the willow farms, wide green meadows or slopes, even the yards had been

occupied. Even the streams and the springs had no way to flow. The cow milk wasn't available because whole the milk was being sent to cities. If anybody would be ready to sell milk, it would be mere like the first rice water and that too twenty five rupees a kilogram. He was compulsed to use skimmed milk powder or drink milkless tea. In the race of earning more in the lesser time whole the paddy land was turned into the fruit orchards. All the people were dependent on the ration depots. He too had planted fruit trees in the big part of the land and in the rest he used to grow vegetables. To be true there didn't grow any vegetables as it got dried due to the shortage of water because the adjoining garden owners were not letting water through their gardens on the pretext that it harms their fruit trees. As such he was dependent for the vegetables too. His fruit trees were withering day by day despite the fact that he had followed the consultation of the horticulture experts. Once they would advise him to use fertilizers. Then they would make him lime wash the trees and subsequently wash lime from the trees. The truth was that the experts had not actually diagnosed the plant disease. At last they advised him to uproot the trees and burn them so that other people might not suffer. With this consultation he was given warning of the punishment in case of non compliance. That is why he had decided to go back to the city after four years. He was content to sell his house and land to somebody at throw away prices. In those four years he had never been to city nor had anyone came from there.

Via the wide road of the city, he was walking towards his old mohalla. The foot path of the one side of the road was shining with beautiful tiles and that on the other side was being adored with the tiles by the masons. There was a sign board installed near it. The sign board was displaying 'Caution, Men at work, Muncipal Council'. His heart pleased and he rose on to the footpath to walk on it. The road was like a board of mirror. At the turn of the road when he turned to the right, he fell down upon an automatic traffic controlling pole which had red, blue and green semi broken lamps like owl eyes. The wires of it were like ruptured veins visible from outside. It was the same pole

which was part of an automatic traffic control system installed in the city at the important crossings when he was living there. The automatic pole had bent its waist and it had lowered its head with the remorse for its failure because after only a few days of functioning it had died unexpectedly. The pole being a corpse of triumph of technical officers and higher ups had become a part of the road in the same manner as were the chiseled and white painted square stones on the sides of the road edging the footpath. Whether anybody had any grief on this corpse, it was only a far away policeman standing on the beat. For him the failure of the pole was his own bad luck.

He proceeded a little in the walk that he had to step down from the foot path because from there it was razed to the ground. In the midst of the footpath a drain was being dug. The broken tiles were heaped .the glistening body of beautiful road was like a bride in the ragged clothes. Big pipes were put in the drain. There was another signboard at the spot and it displayed-

'Caution, Men at work

Drainage and Sewage'

The happiness which he had felt on seeing the footpath finished. He sighed and walked fast some paces. Walking on the same road he saw dangerous black smoke far away. He guessed that a house or a shop would be on fire and he ran. On reaching there he saw some sooty faced and black dressed coolies topping the footpath with tar macadam. To melt the tar the wood was burning in the chulha where from the plumes of smoke were rising to the sky. Through the smoke he saw one more signboard displaying;

'Caution, Men at work

P.W.D'

Blinking the smoky eyes he tried to inter relate the writings of the three sign boards. It was such a question which could be

solved by no one. Firstly the tiling by municipality, then eroding the tiles by drainage department and then tar macadamizing by P.W.D department was a puzzle before him. Thus the only thing which he understood was that those three departments would have passed three budgets. Without bothering whether any more agency had exploited the foot path, he left by a link road to his mohalla. He reached to the place where his old house was located. There was residing his brother with his family in the house. Everything seemed changed to him. Where there used to be the yard, there were three shops. One of the shops was occupied by a tailor, second one by a bread maker and third one by a vegetable seller. The vegetable seller recognized him and called him instantly. He looked towards the vegetable seller and whole heartedly stepped on to the shop and embraced him. “Two, three”, he got engaged in counting the shops. He came to know from the vegetable seller that all the three shops belong to his brother. Some customers came to the shop and the vegetable seller got busy with them. He stepped down from shop, opened a tin gate and entered inside the yard. As soon as he opened the door of the house, he saw his brothers’ children who were playing cricket in the gallery. He saw three doors to the right side of the gallery and three more to the left one however every door was locked. On asking the children he came to know that rooms are occupied by lodgers on rent. The rooms were locked because the lodgers had gone to their work places. He recollected that in the ground story there were only two rooms, one to the right side of the gallery and another to left one when he used to live there. He better knew that these rooms were not so large that these can be divided into three parts each. After kissing the children twice, he ascended the staircase to the upper story. On reaching the upper gallery he found more six rooms there. Five of which were locked and one was without a lock. He himself understood that lodgers would be living in the locked rooms and the room which was open would not be so spacious that he could enter in and lay flat to get rid of fatigue. Instantly he stepped back slowly in utter bewilderment.

About the writer: Ratan Lal Jowher is a poet, critic, fiction writer and translator in kshmiri language. He is original resident of Batapora shopian but presently lives at Roop Nagar Enclave in Jammu.

Publications: 1.Luka baeth volume 10 published by J&k academy of art, culture and languages in 1998

2.Azyuk koshur Adab(edited), criticism, published by Samprati Jammu in 1999.

3.Ahad Saaz Nadim, a book about the contribution of D. N. Nadim pblished by Samprati in 2000.

4. Zoolan: translation of award winning Assamese short story collection, published by Sahitya Academy in 2004.

5.Jalayi watni hund adab: abook regarding kashmiri literature in exile published in 2003.

6. Haruf Haruf Gawah: a poetry collection in kshmiri 2006

7.Sombran ti Saam: an anthology of representative poetry by poets in exile with criticism(edited jointly with Ratan Lal Shant and Makhan Lal Kanwal in 2007.

8.Muthida Bharat: Kashmiri translation of of Shri Aurobindos thoughts and quotes published in 2014.

9.Gora: Kashmiri translation of Rabindra Nath Tagor's world famous Bengali novel(published by Sahitya Academy in 2017)

Face and Nature

Anees Hamdani

In what style do I set steps was known to him that is why he opened the door on hearing the sound of my steps on my coming. He was just in front of me. Before that I would enter in or salute him, I thought whether I committed mistake in recognizing him because his hair was disheveled. His beard was long and not styled as well. His eyes were depicting the continuous sleeplessness of so many nights. My misrecognising him was possible.

Now I had entered in and I had turned my glances from his face to his room. Nothing was in order there. In addition to it there was a heap of cigarettes bits. There were empty cigarette cases and countless papers spread all around. And he was there all alone. It seemed as if he had been relieved from hospital after a long time. Whatever happened that day was perceived by me for the first time otherwise I had come here before too. I understood nothing as to what and how all this had happened. That is why I was assessing the situation while keenly glancing towards all around.

He was glancing firstly towards my face, then to spread papers and cigarette cases, then to the heap of cigarette bits and lastly to the other spread and disordered things.

The cause of these changed conditions was essentially some secret for knowing which I was very impatient and restless. He was more impatient and restless to express the secret. Perhaps he said for the same, “why aren’t you talking today?”

“I am not able to talk?” I said.

He laughed and said, “What does it mean to be not able to talk?”

“Do you know what I am doing nowadays?”

“Yes” I replied.

“Listen then” he said, “I write stories.”

“Why do you write stories?” I said.

“To narrate what I cannot say by tongue.” He said.

I said, “Why didn’t you write stories before today.”

He said, “I didn’t hear till today.”

“What”, I said.

“The same you said.”

“What I said to you?” I asked him surprisingly.

“Recollect”, he said.

“I can recollect nothing. You say please.” I disclosed my disability.

“To say something and then forgetting it or having something in memory and feigning ignorance is your old habit.” He said.

“To be true I never felt this”, I said to him.

He replied nothing and merely moved his lips and instantly once more he lighted his extinguished cigarette.

“You forgot or you feign ignorance having everything in mind as I do?” I asked him after seeing him silent.

“This misunderstanding lies with you from the ancient days. The truth is that there is difference between you and me.That is why I don’t forget or feign ignorance.”He said.
“If it is so, reply then”, I said to him.

“Was this your question; “After what you said and I listened, I started writing stories?”

“Yes” I replied positively.

“Listen then” he said and instantly lighted a new cigarette, “whence you decided that you will kill earthworms, thence I started writing stories.”

I thought a little and said to him, “Why did the death of earthworms inspire your story writing?”

“Once more you committed a mistake. Not the death of earthworms but your killing them inspired my story writing”, he said.

I could not understand anything. Perhaps for the same I started to think over to understand. I hadn’t a habit otherwise I too would have smoked a cigarette.

He found me thinking and said, “which the dream world you have dived into? In reality you are habitual of forgetting and despite that you have something fresh in your memory but you feign ignorance.” Haven’t you said, “I am the noblest of creations?” I recollected this statement when you decided to kill the earthworms. I still enliven that in memory because I am not accustomed to forgetting.

After that he remained silent. I could say nothing but I discerned that I am the noblest of the creations.

“Have you recollected?” he said while effacing the cigarette bit in the ashtray.

“No” I replied.

“You replied everything but you cannot say. You felt and discerned perhaps.” he said.

Such a comment of him seemed truth to me and that is why I could not say anything. As he saw me silent, he said, “Till date nobody has enlightened you about the truth. How could you have been able to feel and discern.”

"Had I warned you?" I said after listening to his comment.

"You could say nothing to me. And I donot feel and discern." He said.

"why?" I asked as I was surprised on listening to his reply.

"That is so because I am not the noblest of the creations", He explained.

I said nothing to him. I took out a cigarette from his case and started to smoke. He smiled on seeing this and effaced the cigarette bit in the ashtray. I stood up and left out of the room. I said nothing to him and he didn't find it suitable to say something to me.

About the writer: Anees Hamdani was a resident of Zaindar mohalla Srinagar. He was grandson of Mirwaiz Hamdani. He was son of Ab Aziz Hamdani (Kashmiri and Urdu writer)who has published many books and especially translated Kibriyati Ahmar in urdu. Anees Hamdani was appointed as programme officer (Farm and Home programme- popularly known as Gaemi Baayan Hindi Khaetri) in Radio Kashmir Srinagar. He was a fiction writer and a playwright. One of his Kashmiri drama's Aodhur Aasmaan (wet sun) is very famous. Aadha Aasmaan (half sky) and Poora Aasmaan (full sky) are his popular urdu dramas.

Anees Hamdani died at the age of forty years in a motorcycle accident in 1989.

Whom Would She Blame

Prof. Abdul Majid Khan

Today as well in the evening she had gone out in search of her chicken. Some time she was calling them in vegetable garden and at other time after entering into the yards of the people. But she didn't find any whereabouts about them any where. Whom the innocent would illegate. She was saying, "Cartshed was full of chicken. All were taken away one by one. Today even my broody hen was stolen away with its chicks. What shall I say whether it was swallowed by a foxor taken away by a dog? Who will say what happened to them?"

The chicken of the village had been gradually going invisible. Had there been some chicken thief who was stealing the chicken of village? Nothing could be understood. She would cast doubts on others with out any discrimination. At one time she would cast doubt on a person and at other time on the other one. It is being said, "The loser has thousand sins but the stealer has only one." Whom would she blame for stealing the chicken? She was licking her lips out of tension. After being dead tired she started cursing, "Ho, the chicken stealer. May you burn to ashes! May hail burst on you! " She had raised hue and cry.

While searching the chicken and cursing she reached there and entered into the yard. It was a thatch roofed house of two stories. There were two friends as renters in the house. Both were employees. One was Umkar Nath and other was Yousuf Malik. They were employees in different departments but rented in a single room. They were cooking their meals separately but eating jointly. They were residing in the second story. In the first story there was a plumber on rent. But his room used to be locked from outside. Perhaps he would have been using window as exit and entrance. No body was aware about his time of

coming or going or food for eating. Every one was busy in own life.

Today she raised hue and cry more loudly than before. She was crying, “Ho chicken stealer, may you turn to ashes. May you substitute me for calamities! May the hailstorm burst on you!” saying this she reached to the gate of the yardand opened the door. She angrily entered in and after looking on all sides she called them, “Hey, who ever is residing here. Come down.” On hearing her cries, both hurriedly came down. They said to her, “What is the matter?” She seized the hand of one of them and took him along to backyard. There were feathers of chicken in abundance. These feathers were witnessing that her chicken had been killed there one by one. On seeing this they got nervous and dumbfounded. They couldn’t think what they would say. Their mouth dried due to anxiety. They set their bewildered glances now on the heap of feathers and then on the lady. They turned speechless. The lady was sure that they had stolen her chicken and eaten them. What would happen now? Both of them worried and looked at each other inexplicably. The chicken feathers were a clear proof that lady was true. Tge chicken had been killed there. It was sure. But who had killed them. Both of them swore that they didn’t know about anything. But who would believe them? The lady said to them, “You have at once killed my chicken and eaten them.”

After taking a break for a while she said to them, “I will see what you have cooked in the cauldron?” Saying this she ascended the stairs and went in to their room. She removed lids from the cauldrons and was surprised to see collard greens in one cauldron and mung beans in the other one.

They said to her, “If, God Forbid, we we had killed your hen then it would have been in our cauldrons. Some one who steals chicken hates us and to defame us he has put chicken feathers in the backyard.”

After being satisfied she descended to the ground story and found the room locked from outside as usual. She looked here and there but found nothing. Consequently she left from there. The innocents took a long sigh for relief. They were thinking, “How are these feathers in the backyard?”

On the second day they saw the plumber going out from the window and leaving from somewhere. Both of them descended to the ground story instantly and entered in to the plumber’s room through the window. They looked around and searched for a clue. A grass mat was furled in a corner. From behind the grass mat they heard cheeping of chicks. They removed the grass mat and found two chicks searching their mother.Their hearts beated faster. There was a cauldron on the chulha. They lifted its lid and were surprised to see the hen cut into pieces, cooked and ready to serve in it. Both of them gazed at each other with wondered glances.

About the writer: Professor Ab Majeed Khan, a resident of 451 Govt housing colony, Bagh-e-mehtab 190015 Srinagar, writes in kahmiri, Urdu and English languages. He has a number of publications, the famous of which are ‘loka macher’ and ‘Dazan Daag’, “ Dushman Kus”, “ Baaz Ghasht” the Kashmiri short story anthologies. In English he has written “ Quranic stories”. Islam : the path of peace. Etc.

Ancestral blanket

Mohiuddin Mushtaq

Rama uncles and Rehman's blanket was famous in the village.The brothers have quarreled over this blanket time and again. The village headmen had as well given their decisions over this blanket hundreds of times in their own ways. If the brothers ever quarreled over anything else, the issue of blanket would unexpectedly usher in, intensify the quarrel and result in such a hue and cry that whole the village would come and watch the scene.

Today unfortunately Rama uncle's hen had entered into the Rehman's cart shed in the typical bird nature. For the birds whole the world is one and united. They are not aware of the intensity of human rivalry and jealousy. The hen had to lay an egg but due to some disturbance at home cartshed she entered in to Rehman's house and hid in their cart shed. However when Rama uncles and his family members came to know this, they raised a hue and cry. "Ho bankrupt! Why have you hid our hen in your cartshed? Ho Beggar! The egg could be bought only for one and a half rupees. However what you have to do with it. Your children have an unfulfilled desire to eat an egg. Now you have hid our hen in your cartshed and by her eggs you want to satiate the appetite and desire of your children." On listening to these remarks of Rama uncle, Rehman's wife retaliated by addressing to her husband, "Be silent, don't you know that soon his wife and children would come, prolong the quarrel and make you ashamed even after their commiting of guilt. Don't you know that he is brazen faced? Do see. He doesn't even feel ashamed. I respect his elderness otherwise I will tear his clothes right now. And he will learn as to whom he is dealing with. He doesn't know that if he is so proud of his family members then we too may have somebody somewhere. He isn't aware about our relatives and friends. They seek for a slight pretext to quarrel with him.They would do with him what a carder does with cotton."

Rehman was getting additionally provoked by her wife's assistance. Almost all the villagers rushed to the spot and gathered there on listening to the quarrel of these two brothers. They were saying to each other, "let us see what would happen to their grand fathers blanket today." They knew that whenever any conflict arises between the two brothers, the blanket comes in between and weeps over its misfortune. All knew that the blanket is a primordial cause of their mutual conflict and ill will. The village headmen had discussed the issue of blanket hundreds of times and to show off their authority they had kept the issue unsettled. They had given the decisions individually. Some had said that the blanket belonged to Rama Uncle as he was elder and the blanket had been with him since the days of his grandfather. Some headmen had given their verdict in favour of Rehman. They held that grandfather was of both of them, so his blanket belongs to both of them as well. They said, "Rama uncle has been using the blanket for a long time. Let it be used now by Rehman." As such all the village headmen had distorted the fortune of blanket in their own ways.

All the villagers knew it well that the blanket had been once sold by their great grandfather for seventy five rupees. The blanket was famous in the village. Everyone was treating it good fortune if he had a chance to furl it. Whenever the rich had marriage ceremony in their home, they would proudly put the blanket on the shoulders of the groom to show off their richness. Rama uncle's great grandfather had had made the buyer resolve that he should not ill treat the blanket by using it in mundane affairs but to reserve it for special occasions only. However after sometime the new owner refuted from his earlier promise and began using the blanket mundanely. As a result colour of the blanket faded and it showed the signs of wear. That time all the family members protested against the new owner and firmly resolved to take back the blanket from him.

It was the wish of God that the new owner could not live long and his sons sold it back to the original owners. However in those days the seeds of ill will and partition were sprouting in

the family. Rehman was hell bent on departing from his brother Rama Uncle. The home was turned in to a battlefield. The joint family was already a challenge to village headmen in showing off their supremacy. That was why they fully supported Rehman in getting parted from his brother. They even promised to support Rehman in every possible way after partition. Finally when brothers parted, there emerged a serious conflict over the blanket. Rehman tried fiercely to purloin the blanket after breaking the lock but it was the will of God that Rama uncle's wife and children saw him red handed and eventually there was a fight. Both the brothers pulled the blanket so forcefully that the innocent broke in to two pieces by the middle and the two pieces left in the custody of the two rivals, one with Rama and other with Rehman.

"Ho, have you called me a bankrupt. Don't you feel ashamed? How can you be ashamed? You have already crossed all the limits of shame and modesty. It is you who has kept the blanket hidden. You are a blanket purloiner and all know that." Rehman was taunting Rama uncle from the veranda loudly.

Rama was not an apprentice in taunting. He gave a befitting reply to Rehman. "Ho, chicken thief. For what, you took the blanket in between. You have kept hidden our hen for an egg worth one and a half rupee. Are you worth of talking about the blanket? You cannot even manage one and a half rupee so that you can show your children what an egg looks like."

Rama uncle's such remarks were giving the expression of such a temperament as per which a man applies all the tools of measurement to assess the poverty of the neighbours and wishes that his neighbours to be poorer than him. As such he can live a life of ease.

All the village headmen who had repeatedly tried to resolve the issue of the blanket came to see the quarrel. They were saying to one another that Rehman is telling truth. In addition to it they were saying, "Grandfather didnot belong to Rama Uncle only

and the blanket will not be solely of him either. Let us admit that he has snatched a piece of blanket but everyone knows that it is not showable. Rehman feels ashamed in taking that blanket rag to the guest. Instead of that rag Rama uncle's piece is showable. The people from other villages still come to our village to see its fringed end."

Some were saying, "The blanket is the right of Rama uncle and Rehman has illegally snatched a piece of it and kept it. Their grandfather has given the blanket especially to Rama uncle for being the eldest grandson. He had a strong belief that Rama uncle would value it and keep it with care. He is elder one and he is capable of enduring the pleasing and annoying times. As such only he can preserve the valuable inheritance."

Some headmen were saying: This time it is not the issue of the blanket. The case is that Rama uncle's hen has entered into Rehman's cart shed. Let us admit that Rehman has not stolen the hen but he can in no way declare it as his own. The innocent hen is a bird which considers whole the whole the world as common and united and flies from one end to other end. These innocents are not humans who have to keep their identity cards in their pockets while leaving out of their homes. They need not get the visa for going from one village to another one. They are not the noblest of the creations as the human beings are.

Whatever came to one's mind he expressed that. All the headmen tried to show off their leadership in their own ways. Rama uncle turned to these elders and said, "Allah has made you fortunate. You know everything. He, who is likely to die young owing to his bad deeds, has kept our hen hidden in his cart shed. Now when our family members asked him about this, he in turn hung upon the blanket. For God's sake tell us what would become of him. Till date how many times he quarreled with us? I remain very cautious and have always prohibited my children from quarrelling with him. I asked them to be cautious about any mishap on their part."

When Rehman heard this, he could not restrain his anger and breathed out fire. He came noisily after tucking up skirts of his garments and began competing Rama Uncle. “Ho, blanket stealer! Are you frightening me? I demand the blanket. It is the symbol of my grandfather and he did not belong to you only. Whatever I will have to do to get the blanket, I will do. Where ever I will have to reach, I will reach there. I will sell my land but I will not let you grab the blanket.”

Rehman blew a fuse and said to all the villagers, “you will remain witnes. I still legitimately demand my grand fathers blanket otherwise I will make him accountable to the inches. We are proud of our children. I will not withdraw even if I need to take my friends and relatives from far off villages. I will not let this fire put out even if I had to shed blood for it.”

Bloodshed! On listening to this word, the villagers scared out of their wits. Even the village headmen dumbfounded. The land had never seen the blood till date. The residents of the village would frighten even in donating blood to a blood deficient patient in the hospital. Now when they heard the word bloodshed from Rehman’s tongue, they trembled by fright and started pacing towards their homes. And in this way the conflict between Rama uncle and Rehman remained unsettled.

About the author: Gh. Mohiuddin lone is a resident of Bugam, Kulgam, J&K. His pen name is Mohiuddin Mushtaq. He is a poet and short story writer. His writings publish in literary journal ‘Saqafat’ published from Shopian J&K.

Use and throw

Vijay Sagar

Standing in front of Kakaji whose refill of the pen had exhausted and he was about to throw it away through the window, Shambunath said, “Ho, what is up with you. Does any body throw away a pen?”

“Sir, it is use and throw article.”

Shambunath went motionless for a while. He thought that to use is right thing but to throw … Shambunath`s fingers had suffered the wear as a result of writing with the traditional pen in his youth. He was being introduced to the traditional pen by his father at first instant after arising from sleep in the morning. He was the first boy of the village who had matriculated from Lahore University. He had studied in kerosene lantern light and written even on the palm leaves. His father had inculcated some essential values in him like; to say truth, not to grab anyones property, to be economical, to be punctual and regular, to accomplish ones task wholeheartedly as an obligation. As a result of which he was doing second job after retirement. He was hale and hearty.

Remaining silent for a few moments Kakaji guessed that he might have commited a mistake due to which Shambunath had plunged deep into his being. After comprehending the environment and assessing the timely situation, he changed the content of conversation and said to him, “Sir Shuban ji had sent an application for a day’s casual leave.”

“What kind of emergency has compelled hims due to which he sent the application for leave.”

“Sir, he had a trial in the court today.”

“Trial, About what?”

“Sir, he is going to divorce his wife.”

“What... why... I had seen his wife. She is straightforward, simple and gentle.”

“Sir, that is the cause.’’

“Oh! God save us… It means that nowadays you practice use and throw theory.”

About the writer: Vijay Kumar Koul (Vijay Sagar) a Kashmiri fiction writer, born on April 8th, 1953 at Seer Kanligund, Anantnag Kashmir and resided there till 1990. Presently he is residing at 7/B ‘Shuhul’ Sharda Colony Patoli Brahmana P.O. Muthi-181205.He retired as Deputy Director, Planning and Development Department, Govt. of J&K. His short stories have been published in: 1.‘Aalove’ the literary journal of information department, J&K govt. 2. ‘Kasheer’J&K Govt. 2. ‘Koshur Samachar’ New Delhi 4. ‘Vakh’Jammu 5. Saqafat-A literary magazine published by Bazmi Saqafat Kashmir. 6. Nagrad Jammu 7. Kheer Bhawani times –Jammu.

Completion

Mohi-u-deen Reshi

While crossing the bridge, old Amira Kadal, Gazala was almost stuck when she saw a lady with a beautiful baby in her lap coming from opposite side. She looked at her with the unending gaze and asked her, “Aren’t you Maryam”

Yes of course.

Oh! Are you Gazala?

Both of them hugged each other and kissed as well.

Who is in your lap?

He is my son.

Oh! When had you been married?

What are you saying? This is my second son.

Four years had passed when I became Maryam Rashid.

Ok. What is Rasheed sahib doing?

He is an engineer.

Haven’t you married?

Gazala breathed out a long sigh and replied “No”

Why?

What will I say, dady searches for me an aristocratic family lad for me and that too a Gazzetted officer.

“And what do you want?”

Gazala had no words to reply. To her ownself she thought, "Would there be even a manual labour for me."

"Why you held your tongue?"

"Oh no" Gazala laughed and evaded the issue. However she felt the hallowness and duplicacy of her laughter.

"Now leave the issue. Tell me, what have you done after the graduation?"

"I was selected as a teacher."

"Means a teacher madam"

"Whatever you like to call it"

"And you."

"I manage the house hold of Rashid sahib and nothing else."

The friends of woman's college remained busy in expressing each other's circumstances.

Amid this they heard, "Hello, sister you have jammed traffic. Now leave the story. In this way they got interrupted. Promising for meeting again, they left on their own ways.

But Gazala seemed to lose her senses on seeing Maryam and her baby. She could not figure out where she had to go. Again and again Maryam's shining face and lovable style comes before her eyes. She thinks that Maryam is of her age then why her health and beauty are unchanged .Whereas she even of 30 years is pale and broken. In the over crowded bus among the standing unseated passengers, she still has Maryam and her son before the eyes. They were occupying his mind and heart. When one of the seated middle aged men saw her condition, he said to her, "Hi where are you going. Come and be seated on my place"

Gazala awakened back to senses and asked the fellow passenger "where have we reached?"

She came to know that she has gone five kilometres away from her home. She got the bus stopped and got down from it. The night was to be approaching soon. With the darkening of the darkness, Gazala felt embarrassed on the road. The vehicles were speeding by raising her scarf to the skies. Meanwhile a bike stopped beside her and young man riding it asked "Where are you going?"

Initially Gazala embarrassed and then said, "Sir I have to go to Bonapora"

Having no other option of going to home, Gazala rode on to the bike.

The biker asks her why she was so late in the evening.

She replied that she was absent minded in the bus and thus reached here.

"Oh one should be very cautious otherwise one misses the way."

Gazala kept mum and spoke to herself "I am already lost"

But she felt the feeling of ownness in his remark and thus she remained attentive to his words…

There in the home, father of Gazala Professer Kareem bukhari was tense as to why she was late. He glanced towards his wife Syeda Aapa who was rubbing her finger nails with the thumb as if wishing something eagerly. Bukhari sahib realized if he had not been stubborn, Gazala would have been married earlier and the responsibility would have been discharged. He was very proud of his being from aristocratic and rich lineage that is why he didn't compromise in the matter of Gazala's marriage. However her wife was ready to compromise with the high or low status.

Gazala began to admire the behavior and art of talking of young man. She asked, “What is your name and what do you do”

The young man decelerated the speed of motorcycle and replied, “My name is Sheikh Mohd Imran and I am a graduate in mechanical engineering. But destiny disfavoured me at the crucial time and I became a mechanic. “ Oh! ” Gazala was surprised.

“Why are you surprised.” circumstances make a human do unusual things. When after doing B.E in mechanical engineering, I couldn’t get a job. Idleness hovered upon me and family taunted me like this “despite being a healthy young man he has no guts to do anything, and old parents are working for the household expenses.” One day I decided that I have a skill, and I became an apprentice to a motor mechanic.

When on the first evening I came back from the workshop, family members saw me in black oiled clothes like an eel, they screamed. They took it as an insult.They illegated me of defaming the name of family.They drew me out of the home. From that day I am alone living as a renter.”

Gazala began to develop the sympathy for Imran and said, “Your decision was right because no work lessens the status of a man. However we are habitual of showing off the hollow status that is why we are desolated.”

This expression rekindled Imran and he increased the speed of the bike. After two or three minutes, Gazala softly pressed Imran’s shoulder. Imran abruptly braked the motorcycle and Gazala struck with his back, but he kept her close with right hand and said, “Madam, are you hurt?”

She was unable to speak back. She felt as if a withered bough rejuvenated by the spring breeze and her whole body went through a strange sensation. After sometime she said, “I reached

my destination. My home is in this street." Imran got down from the motorcycle and went along with her.

Waiting on the doorsteps when Syeda saw the couple, her joy found no bounds. She felt as if the wedding reception song broadcasting on the radio at that time was good ominous and the time was the best one. The wedding song was: peace and bless upon our bridegroom, your coming lit the whole world.

Syeda aapa was looking at Imran with loving glances and inadvertently she shook hands with him. Gazala was astonished. She cast a glance on her mother and other on sheikh Imran. Instantly she ran towards her room. Her bosom was beating. For a while she looked at her bosom. She glanced towards the mirror of dressing table to see the withered face of Gazala flown with the tulip colour like that of Maryam's face.

About the author: Mohi-ud-din Reshi born on 12.08.1951 at Rehbab Sahib, Aali kadal, Srinagar and residing at Shah Faisal Colony Upper Soura, Srinagar.J&K, is an adept short story writer in Kahmiri language.

Publications: 1.Founder Editor of 'Aalove' a prestigious publication of Department of Information, Govt of J&K.

2. Worked as Editor Incharge of 'Maktoob' fortnightly urdu news magazine, Assistant Editor 'Tameer' (Urdu), Assistant Editor 'Kashmir Today' (English)

3. 'Aena Aatish' a compilation of Kashmiri short stories – Sahitya Academy Awarded Reshi Mohiuddin for the book in 2013

4. Many of his short stories have been translated into English and other languages. Several of his translated short stories have been published in 'English Studies in India' a literary journal of Kashmir University.

5. His short story ‘Nakh’ has found place in text book of Kashmiri by J&K state Board of School Education.

Award: Reshi Mohiuddin has been awarded by Sahitya Academy for his short story collection ‘Aena Aatish’ in 2013.

Love marriage

Bansi Nirdosh

What is “Thonda” and what is called by it. Even today I don’t know it. Is it a Kashmiri word or a Persian one, this as well I don’t know. Only linguist can declare whether the root of the word “Thonda” is Sanskrit or Hebrew. To find its root is still a puzzle for me.This word stroke my ears at first when Keshavnath’s son had come home from Hisar to spend vacations from college. This happened when he was washing face from a tap in the courtyard. My wife informed that his name was Thonda. On looking at him from head to toe, I figured that he must be a Thonda: short statured and fat like the round cushions which support the back of big tradesman on the shops. How much you push them or load them, it is impossible for them to develop a wrinkle.

Thonda was undergoing agricultural training in Hisar and had first time came home. Keshewnath had not himself come home for past fifteen or sixteen years. He was “patwari” doing the professional duty in a number of villages. While Keshavnath was wandering from village to village, the lodgers remained changing in his house. Keshavnath’s house was next to ours, very close. Even in The childhood days I had seen his wife like a “Kishtiwari woman.” He had two daughters. They were younger than me and Thonda was a mere breast fed baby in those days.

Those days keshavnath was discharging his duties in Tungmarg as Patwari when I heard that his wife had died. After that Keshavnath was transferred to Vurmul as Girdawar and in the same Vurmul he got his daughters wedded. Had anybody gone to Tungmarg on his wife’s death to condole him or not is not in my memory. However I remember that to attend his both the daughters marriage ceremonies, so many woman and some men of the neighborhood went to vurmul. My wife and my mother were along with them. I still recollect that my wife and mother, after returning from Vurmul, praised Keshavnath in such way on

listening to which I deeply felt my utter destitution. I felt as if I have wasted my life. To be a gambler is better but to be a patwari is the best. Whoever has money, earned by fair or fool means, and spends the same for others has all the virtues and all are happy with him.

Whole the neighborhood was boosting the riches of Keshavnath and counting his virtues. However they felt sorrow for him that he was destined to rocks and waste lands. Having his own house and household, he was never let to live in the city. The neighbours were of the opinion that Keshav nath was destined to settle in the village. This might have come true, but last year there was an accident in the neighbourhood which persuaded him to come back home. Actually there was a house in between the Keshav nath's house and ours. The house was collapsed to the ground due to heavy snowfall. The dwellers of the house rescued themselves very difficultly. There were seven partners of the house and and they had seventeen destinations. One family left to one street ands other to another one. The debris of the collapsed house was cleared in just a few days. As soon this house collapsed, the view of the neighboring house cleared. Mine and Keshav nath's house`s inside rooms were lighted afterwards. Perhaps Keshav nath was waiting for this house to collapse or he had thought that if the house be kept for lodgers, this would have the same fate as that of collapsed one. Keshav nath instantly reached his home. He had repaired the roof and painted his windows red. Those were the winter days and we were living in ground floor. What changes were in the upper floor were known to me in the summer, when ascended to live in the attic. On the Balcony I felt a different view which I had never observed since my childhood. The Shanker acharya temple and Harivan mountain's rock pinnacles were clearly visible from balcony. This sight was very influencing but I was influenced more by the "Maharaj". Mahraj was daughter of Wanamala, dazzling like a fresh fish. Our houses were blocked till then by the house that collapsed. On the very first day I felt that as if Maharaja was waiting for the house to collapse so that we could come close to one another. What was I feeling? Whenever I used

to stay in the balcony before leaving for office, Maharaj was fluttering like a bird which leaves towards his nest when sun sets but in the mid way evening dawns and it can't recognize its nest. Mahraj's house had balcony like that of ours without any windows.while sitting in the balcony, I could easily see whatever she did in her balcony. Maharaja knew I was a married man, a man who has children too. But despite that her interest in me kept increased. Had anyone been in my place, he would have as well mis-concieved the situation. I was figuring out what Mahraj demanded. She ought to have been seen by somebody, gazed by someone. The more I used to look at her, the more she would maintain her looks, Oil and comb her hair, wash, bath and till late wait for me on the balcony.

Now my wife had gradually developed doubts on me. She was time and again teasing me but I used to swear by my kids and say, "it is your fear, don't you see towards me. Am I handsome? Am I rich? What attraction lies in me? Had you been in place of Mahraja, would you love me? You haven't my love even after marriage.You illegate this unmarried and young girl. Think if any body listens what will he say? Illegating the daughter of an already broken mother doesn't suit you." How much influence my stories and my advices had on my wife? I knew it was zero. Being conscious of telling lies to my wife, I was not ashamed a bit for my conduct. I was very clearly feeling that Mahraj has reached that stage of life where a bachelor girl wants to give birth to babies and settle a home. And why didn't she have? If some years sped by, then she would remain as such. The beauty of a girl is short lived and age passes swiftly. I feared that the warmth of her internal longings shouldn't cool within her. Because I knew that Wanamala being a widow, cannot afford an attractive dowry and find a suitable guy for her.

Amid all this I saw thonda and considered him suitable for Maharaj. Thonda was a good, gregarious boy and he was enjoying gossiping with me. He had come home for passing vacation but I knew only after fifteen days that he wanted to go back to Hisar.

One day I summoned him and took him to my room I said to him, “what is the matter? Why are you about to leave.”

Thonda said “sir, what else will I do here?” I visited Dal Lake, Naseem Bagh and went to Gulmarg. I stayed three days in pahalgam as well. Now where to go? I feel tired in idling the whole day. Now what to do here? I think I will go back to Hisar. I feel bored here I am fit there.There are so many friends days will pass on in a fine way.”

I laughed over his prolonged monologue. I said to him laughingly, “you are saying partly true.You would be bored here but the faults lie in you.”

“What faults I have.” Thonda exclaimed in such a a way as if he was caught while stealing something.

I said, “you donot know the way of passing the time. you would have never been bored if you had done something.”

“What would be I do? How can I pass the time?” He asked.

I replied with confidence, “You do love someone”

After having a wide laughter, he said, “Will I love, sir. What are you saying? You might get me thrashed.”

Thounda’s typical expression was suitable. Thounda was like a round cushion, alike from head to toes.

To make love one must be brave-hearted. And that too in Kashmir where on this word the youngsters are tortured with hot iron rods. Where even after giving birth to three children, the huband or wife is not supposed to show or express love to his partner. If somebody comes to know that Thonda is in love with an unmarried girl, he would be insulted publicly. He would be expatriated then. Despite keeping these tensions and fears in view, I advised Thonda to love. While he was standing up, I pulled his trousers and made him sit again. I said to him, “Don’t be shy, it is not a matter of shame. I will tell you what to do. You

follow my advice for two days. If you feel bored again, you better go to Hisar then. “Now say sir what have I to do”, Thounda said.

“Listen” I said to him pointing my fingers towards the house of Wanamala “look, towards that house.There lives Mahraj daughter of Wanamal. You see her clearly. She has not any other equalent in beauty. Had I been of your age, you would see how deeply I would have loved her.

“Have you loved anyone?” Thounda enquired as if he was enquiring as a teacher in school, “Have you seen Tajmahal”

“I am a man of household responsibilities, what love will I do. When I was of your age, there was mere oblivion. The girls could not be seen. If they could be seen, that was only on marriage ceremonies. We used to love but only for a day or two. The ceremony of marriage was over and so was our love. She went back to her home and we to our home. Neither she missed us nor did we. The feeling of love and warmth used to remain for a day or two and then the world of forget fullness. Nowadays there is enlightenment everywhere.Nowadays there are excuses, facilities and means to love. A man needs only to be free from work. You have spare time.Pass it enjoyingly.See I will tell you a strategy. You start loving Maharaja from today. You make her realize that you love her. If she opens window, you cough to catch her attention. If she comes out into the yard, you come out on balcony. You will yourself see that what a taste you will have in loving her. You will not be free to realise the passing of a day and coming of a night. However, the night will pro- long for you as you will long for the sun to rise so that you can see the Maharaj again”

Thounda was deeply impressed by my long lecture.What image of mine he would have got? I didn’t worry about that. I had resolved that Maharaj needs a boy and Keshav nath’s Thounda was the best choice. If it goes as I wished. if thounda falls in love, Wanamal will be left free from the trap of

responsibilities and Mahraja will fulfill her desires and instincts. After that I didn't get chance to meet Thounda for many days. But I was confident that he is at home and hasn't gone back to Hisar, that boredom is off from him and he is in love with Maharaja too. I saw a lot of changes in Maharaj too. Some time before, she was wearing very simple and outdated dresses. But before a day I saw her wearing a fashionable dress which bolly wood actresses wear in movies. Yesterday I saw her standing on the balcony leaning with the ventilator and watching cricket match of the children in the yard. It did not seem to me that my interest in her had decreased. As per routine she used to do her make up in the balcony and call her mother loudly to catch my attention. I was feeling no changebut simultaneously I would think Thonda is not sorry. If he had been bored and hadn't been in love, he would have packed his luggage and left for Hisar leaving the vacation as such.

THonda has then eight days of vacation when I come back from office. From the street I looked at the house of Maharaj, I found that the front side of balcony was covered from one end to another by old ragged blankets. I was shocked as if someone struck my head with a heavy log of wood. My heart started beating faster. What would be the matter? What a change!

"Had mother displeased with Mahraj? Had she doubted on Thonda. Some thing is there. Instead of going to my room for changing the clothes, I straightly ascended to the attic. Along with the shoes I approached to the hearth and stood on the nearing window sill. I firstly asked my wife about the matter, "What is this new design. Wanemal has covered the windows and doors. She has covered the balcony fully with curtains."

"You ask as if you don't know." wife replied me mockingly in a way as if I had done some blunder.

"No, I swear upon you. I don't know what has happened." While speaking I felt as if I blurred.

My wife felt my embarrassment and said, “Wanemal has engaged her daughter Maharaj with Keshavnath.”

“And what about Thonda” I involuntarily spoke out.

He has to go back to Hisar tomorrow.

About the writer: Bansi lal Wali popularly known as Bansi Nirdosh was born in 1930 at Badyar Bala Srinager. He along with his family later moved to Sathu Barbar Shah close to Ramchander temple. He was a witer in Urdu,Kashmiri and Hindi. He is a famous playwright and fiction writer of Kashmiri language. As a journalist and editor he worked for Naya Zamana (Amritsar based urdu newspaper), Khidmat (Srinagar based urdu news paper) Aftab (Srinagar based Newspaper). He also worked for Radio Kashmir Srinagar and wrote scripts for popular programmes like Haalat e Haazira and Vadi Ki Awaaz.

Publications: Baal Marayo, Aadam Chu Yithai Badnam and Girdaab- short story collections in Kashmiri

Akh Daur: a novel in Kashmiri. The novel has been translated in Hindi

Mukjaar: novel in Kashmiri

Translation: Kalidasa’s Sanskrit play “ Malvikagnimitra”

After remaining as a renter for sometime at Serwal Jammu, the family finally settled at Ban Talab Jammu. He left for heavenly abode in August 2001.

About-facing

Ab Ahad wahid

All through the night I was sleepless and curious to know. I was in uncertainty as either mirror is shadowed itself or I saw some crooked and virtual thing.God knows better what other I perceived in the mirror. That is why I wiped it fully with the sleeve of the Pheran (long outer gown) before I saw my face again.

After all isn't it strange. All of a sudden and with out any cause, this immense change in ones looks. Had it been so, I would have noticed any change or any type of deficiency there in. I am healthy and smarter than I was before. Yes, it is true that the vision of my eyes is blurred from sometime. But that too is not so serious that I cannot even perceive and recognize my own face. No, no. never. However I can not recognize and identify anybody. All exept me seem rolling stones of a river to me. Such stones that where ever you push them, they will displace there.I perceive my self the same as I was before. But the appearance that mirror showed me yesterday … May God forgive me …that sends chills down my spine. I cannot even believe that it was me. As such the organs and the parts of the face were same as two ears, two eyes, nose and mouth. But oh! May God spare the Hindu and the Muslim from such a face!

I wiped the face with sleeve of my pheran. That did not satisfy me and I wiped it again fully with the under garment of the pheran. I imagined that the hazy shadow will clear away and the face can be seen clearly. But I don't know why I wiped whole the face slowly with hand. I touched the ears, nose, eyes and mouth with my hand. I imagined whether there is any problem. I thought that the appearance may have changed somehow but there wasn't even a slight alteration. The face was same as it had been earlier. The unaltered two ears, two eyes, nose and mouth were present.

I consulted a little with myself whether I will see in a mirror or not. The heart said, “It is better to believe because I sustain on the belief that I am alright.” The mind did not serve as it was itself bewildered.

The eyes said, “We cannot believe as long as the lids are closed. What problem we have. God forbid. Are we blind? Light must be the proof of light.”

I once again wiped my face unhesitatingly. I dared not to see into the mirror. How can I say what happened to me? How was I entangled? I even decided to take poison. I left alone. No body remained with me. Neither conscious nor mind nor light nor sense was with me and neither could I locate them. I could not figure out what to do. Had I gone out, I would have been embarrassed by the taunts of the people. I thought that when people will see me, they will fear and flee. Even the street urchins will vex me and they will pelt stones on me. All this led to apprehensions and nothing else.

At last I decided that the mirror is now clear and I should satisfy myself. Consequently I reached to the wall where the mirror was installed. Balancing my feet I saw into the mirror from head to toe. Unbelievable! You cannot trust. It was not me… I … I was nowhere. It was altogether a different and frightening being. My body drenched in sweat. Every pore perspired. My legs trembled suddenly. The piercing chill of the extreme winter chilled down my spine and swelled the pores of my body. I saw the pits of landmines amid a road instead of the ears. I saw the window spaces of a semi-burnt house instead of the eyes. There was no nose but there was an armored anti mine vehicle in the midst of four way as if in ambush to attack every passer-by. The mouth was bleeding. With extra long teeth, a horrible and frightening alligator was running towards me. Have you seen such an appearance of me? It doesn’t seem to me that even you can keep your senses.

When I found no way, I took the mirror from the wall and forcefully dropped it on the ground. The mirror broke to the miniature pieces and the room reverberated with the frightening cries and sounds. On every piece of mirror, there emerged a frightening being like that of me. They raised a strange hue and cry on seeing me. I would have fled but to where and how could I? My knees were unable to move as if they were broken and my eyes had about- faced. I could not understand what to do.

About the writer: Abdul Ahad Wahid lives at Kashmir valley's Bogund village that lies in Kulgam district. Wahid is a poet, fiction writer, columnist and a social worker. Wahid writes columns for local dailies like Aftab, Srinagar times, Kashmir Uzma, Tameeli-Irshad etc as well as for some national dailies like Denik Bhaskar, Indian express etc.

Publications: Matsa Mahapara Gulaban Manz (poetry), Shihil Tengal (Short stories)

Let's visit Shambu Nath

S.Raazi

Ramzan sahib is a resident of Sondipora. He superannuated from the sercice recently. Ramzan sahib was an employee in Gas Factory of Pampore. His duty used to start at nine in the morning that is why he would leave his home at dawn and return at dusk. Initially he had to come from Sondipora to Kanelwon, almost one and a half kilometer, on foot. Then if he would get a vehicle in the odd time, he would reach Bijbehara through it. However he had had no problem in getting a lift from Bijbehara to Pampore as the highway passes through the two towns. Most often he would not get vehicle at Kanelwon, due to which he had to reach Bijbehara on foot but he always reached to his office on time. He had arranged something to solve the problem. He had bought a scooter but unluckily he left it for ever after a little accident.

Recently I was coming from Bijbehara to my village on foot in late afternoon because there was strike and public transport was off from the roads. Meanwhile I saw a man from my village and Ramzan sahib who was returning from his duty. In this way three of us assembled in the way and began walking as a group. On these occasions, the conversation is but natural. As such the travel becomes enjoying and the walking an ease. We were enlightened by Ramzan sahib when he shared his experiences. After finishing his talk Ramzan sahib asked other person the whereabouts of his home. After giving information of so many things the other man said to him that his brother had qualified for MBBS and he had to go Bangalore for training but mother didn't let him go as she considered his departing a big robbery to home. On listening to this he interrupted him and said to him, "Didn't you motivate her for the sake of your brother's career? You aren't an illiterate person."

The man of my village said in reply to him, "Sir, I had to support my mother to please her."

On listening to this Ramzan sahib's inner being got ablazed to the full. I felt that from the tone of his speech but despite that he controlled himself and didn't talk anything abusing or evocative. While walking and talking we reached Thajiwara near a Pandit house where three families had been living and which had been a prosperously settled home of almost thirty members in total. But after militancy only three persons were living there. Those were shambunath, his wife and their youngest son Roshan lal. However Roshan lal's whole family had fled. Consequently on reaching there Ramzan Sahib could not restrain and said to us, "let us visit Shambunath." Willy-nilly we followed him.All of us entered to meet Shambunath. Shambunath pleased on seeing us and equally surprised for the same. He requested us for taking tea but we excused as it was very late then. Finally he asked us, "Is everything alright? How have you got time to visit us?"

Without replying his question Ramzan Sahib said to him, "Maharaj, this house was full of members of three families but now you are only three members here. Don't you miss your family members?"

Shambunath replied, "No, dear son, never. Why to miss and what to miss about? When family members prosperously settle at any other place, then what and why to worry about?"

Ramzan Sahib got a suitable and relevant opportunity. He turned to the man of my village and said to him after scolding, "Damn yourself, see what is called strength and patience."

Shambunath was dumbfounded. He could not understand as to why Ramzan Sahib lost his temper. But whenever I recollect that event I fully appreciate the wisdom of Ramzan Sahib.

About the writer: Ab Rahim Sheikh popularly known as and keeping pen name ' S.Razi' was born in 1943 in Kanelwon, Bijbehara J&K and resides there presently. Having masterates in Kashmiri, he retired as Headmaster. He is a poet and fiction writer. He writes literature for children as well.

Publications: S. Razi has more than two dozen publications. Some of these publications are 1. Kalam-e-Razi 2 . Maanz-e-Gule Miane 3 . Noor-un-ala nor 4. Hamrung 5. Bulbul 6. Mushk etc etc. one of his book ‘ Yak Rangi Haendi Saayi Nebar has been translated into English by Shafi Shauq under the title ‘ Far from the shadows of monochromatic.

Awards: S. Razi has received Sahitya Academy’s Bal Sahitya Purskar in recognition of his book of Child Literature ‘Kath Vanai’ in Kashmiri language, the first in Kashmiri in 2010.

Bloody lips

Mushtaq Mehdi

The night was proceeding towards its destination slowly and gradually. The silence inside was like the serenity outside.

In the shelter of the withered walls and in dim yellow light were he and the epitome of his instinct, a living idol and a fairy like sweet heart.

The belle was close to him and he was lost in her eyes. All of a sudden he startled. He felt that she has no sincerity in emotions, no warmth. Even she has sold the intoxicating effect of her eyes to someone. He doubted that that the thief has crept in from somewhere.

It was the thief who was seen first behind the wall. It was the thief who all of a sudden rattled the doors and windows in a dark night. The thief, despite seeing whose prints, could not be seen because the castle was itself trapped by the web of fog all around.

The sweet odour of body was replenishing the air and it was deep dark night.

But early in the morning next day as soon as the sun was out on its usual track, the search started. He reached to the nook and corner of the house in search of the thief but he was found nowhere. The thief had hid himself.

The day long embarrassing search exhausted his mind and body. He felt enticed to sleep at early evening. As he expressed his intention to go to bed, his sweet heart laid her beautiful body before him. Very soon he was in deep slumber. At midnight he awakened all of a sudden. He had his whole body bathed in sweat as if he had dreamed a dreadful dream. Making his eyes wide open, he glanced around seriously. He stood up and looked to search behind the door and the wall. The sweetheart started

noticing him with bewilderment and then asked, “Who are you looking for.”

In reply he casted a devastating glance at her. He didn’t unlock the lock of his lips. Silently he left out of the house.

The stars were illuminating in the sky. Days and weeks passed. He remained steadfast and never lost the guts. He kept the search continue. To seize the thief became his aim in life. And one day …that day’s sun was dark. Everything was befogged. All were running towards their destinations. Being tired and exhausted he entered in to his four walls and his glances fell upon the thief whose appearance was pregnant with previous impressions. The thief was very close to his sweetheart rather the thief had entered into the hidden crevices of his beloved. *On seein*g this for a while he was dumbfound. He could not believe upon his eye glasses.He thought that the power of his eye glasses had decreased. It showed the faulty objects.But no ... Very soon he thought, “The power of my eyeglasses is alright. The eye glasses show what ever is before it. It is not the eyeglasses which are perverted but these are the relations that have lost their reality, significance and credibility. The human relation has sold its trust in the market. The feeling of insult and hatred set his whole body ablaze. Strange sounds were produced from his mouth. The sounds were like the sounds of some broken chord instrument. He yelled to say, “And this is your real version. Mean! Jilting woman, you cannot negate the reality.”

“Reality!” taking the side of the thief she burst like a poisonous atom bomb. She cried to reply back, “from the pre historic times, my currency is in vogue. Only my currency is in vogue. What are you? What is your reality? First you realize your nature then cry like a moonstruck man.”

To save his skin, he too had a reacting missile but without motion. He had his throat filled with rotten black soil. In his eyes the tears and darkness were accumulated and mixed. All of a

sudden all the walls burst and fell upon him. He was injured and knocked down upon the floor mouthwardly.

After some time, he was back to senses. He thought, “To remain motionless means suicide. I don’t want to die. Yes, I don’t want to die. Then what am I doing here?”

He thought and stood up subsequently. He shook himself and left out from his four walled shelter with sharp steps towards unknown and strange horizons. What was the reality of relations was not known to him. An idea flashed his mind: “She was certainly a delicate being who sacrificed her comforts and conveniences to give me birth and to fulfill my desires and she is too a delicate being who dispersed my existence in communion with the thief and trapped me in this desolated groove.”

Is being diversified?

Does the soul hidden in the being change different manifestations in different conditions?” It was a matter of enquiry and he had the curiosity to know the reality.

He consulted a number of hermits, divine people and religious scholars but no one could give him a satisfying answer. He kept on wandering, thinking and practicing. Unknown ways and unknown cities became his halts.

He was tiresome and exhausted but the curiosity to know the reality made him not to stop anywhere but to keep going on to new places in search of truth. He kept going on the desolated places, lush green forests and to the mountainous terrains. Finally he reached to such a city where the people fearlessly play, run and walk on the water. He didn’t know what the name of the city was. But he found a sort of solace here. He found life living even in stones here. He saw the pigeons and crows jointly bath in the river of fire. He saw lotus grow out of the sand. He perceived everything lovingly revolving around its own centre. He found the eyes of the people of this city don’t turn into reddish fire trenches like that of his own people’s in his home

city. He found everyone busy here, content and happy in his own state of affairs.

This ….this vista…how could I see the city, if I had not left the four walls?

He experienced something rather he certainly believed that a man gets something on losing something .He found the answer to his question.Now his more wandering to far off places was purposeless.now he wanted to leave the city very soon and he craved to meet his beloved in his four walls. He hurriedly started his journey back to home.

He was utterly astonished when he reached in his own neighborhood. Nobody was attentive to him on seeing him. All were lost in their own selves. Everyone's eyes had an expression of strangeness and otherness.

He thought, "What is the fun of complaining and what to complain about. These are the strangers, not my own people. The strangers forget very soon. Mine is that part, the four walled place where my sweetheart resides."

He left for his home hurriedly. As he reached his home he knocked the door. After sometime the door was opened. He went inside with contentment and serenity. But he saw a strange condition inside. There was the thief …and with the thief was one more thief. In their hands there were sharp dazzling iron armaments.

He could not comprehend the affairs. But suddenly his disturbed glance fell upon his sweetheart. On seeing the lips of his beloved it seemed difficult for him to breathe in or breathe out. The lips and the teeth of the sweetheart were red with the blood. She had become a cannibal.

Opening wide her bloody mouth, she came close to him. Examining him from head to toes she spoke to her companions, "The prey is fine."

“Prey” His whole body trembled with fear of death.

The sweetheart and companions surrounded him closely. He cried, “I … I am not a prey.” Don’t you recognize me? I am … I am yours.”

She got startled. She mixed her glances with the glances of the thief who was on left side. She started laughing loudly. After an elongated and loud laughter she said to him in a kingly style, “The animal which leaves the forest is to be punished with death or life imprisonment. Say, what do you opt for?”

“I … I will …”

His eyes longed to see the sweetheart despite the cruelty of her. His eyes angled towards the sweetheart. His glances entangled with her bloody lips.He replied very submissively, “slavery … only your slavery. I accept it.”

The sweetheart thought something and said to him in a kingly manner, “take the sword and keep it with you. Take care of the sword and from today you are the keeper of my threshold.”

About the writer:Mushtaq Ahmad Shah , pen name Mushtaq Mehdi born on 13 february 1952 at Khanyar,Srinagar Kashmir and presently residing at Madina colony, Mala bagh Hazratbal Kashmir is a poet,playwright, broadcaster and fiction writer. He has been working as director, anchor and producer of so many programmes like Valiv Zanavand Documentary on Sofi poets for DD kashir Srinagar

Publications:1. Mitei kay diyay (short stories) 2.Nagmaie Dil (Gazals in Kashmiri language)3.Angan main Woh (short stories)4. Shakar Baba (four radio plays) to be published 5. Manzil kahan hay teri(short stories)

Puli-sirat (The bridge over hell)

Zahid Mukhtar

The morning had not yet born out of the womb of the night. The summoner (muezzin) had not yet performed the azan, nor had the cocks dared to spread their wings in the pen yet, that outside a vehicle passed on the desolate and silent road announcing something. I started to wake up by that sudden noise and until I could have comprehended something, the announcing vehicle had moved out of the limits of our neighborhood. That is why I could get only the last words of the announcement- "All the people are directed to assemble in the park at the daybreak."

I switched on the light. The children turned over in the bed as if they protested against the awkward and untimely electric light. Wiping her eyes my wife rose from the bed and without comprehending and enquiring gave her own decision- "have you got up early for smoking cigarette?"

She was accustomed of making issues out of nothing. But that time I really felt the want of smoking a cigarette. I got already kept cigarette case and matches from the pillow and lighted a cigarette.

"Have you heard, there was some announcement outside?" I said to her while taking a puff from the cigarette. "What" as if my wife got stung by the chewing louse, "what are you saying? What announcement."

"God knows better why we are summoned today" I took a long puff from the cigarette.

"But they were saying that this would not happen again."

"Who –who are you talking about."

“The same people who had come to demand votes. Weren’t they saying that if they are voted, then we have not to hear such announcements?”

“Crazy!” Their task is is only to say. However if there is issue of doing anything, its decisions are taken elsewhere.”

My wife left a long sigh and God knows what she said to herself and left out of the room however I remained busy in gazing the circles of cigarette smoke which were revolving around in the room. My innocent kids had been again in deep slumber. They were enduring the punishment of undone crimes when the poisonous smoke of my cigarettes was mixing with their breath and harming them. The boards of the window were embracing and consoling each other in such a way as we people console each other when we are summoned in this way.

The sound of the announcing loud speaker was now reaching from some far off place but the sense of the announcement was already permeated in to our conscience.

The quality of human nature is miraculous. If an issue leaves a mark on the screen of his conscience, a mere signal of that issue at any time would make him comprehend the same quite satisfactorily. That is why that despite hearing the announcement partially I was preparing myself for the moments to come because the words of the announcement had been imprinted on my heart and mind over the years as there is the map of Hindustan and Pakistan on the map of the world. The words of the announcement had left such indelible marks on my conscious as there are the innumerable lines of hatred and border between two countries.On the two sides of these lines there are people who have been dying for the sake of a piece of paradise over the years. However the speakers say that the paradise has lost quite earlier and very soon the geographers would be tasked to search the location and the debris of it.

Had the burning butt of cigarette not given the feeling of hotness to the middle finger of my left hand, I would have lost in some

unknown world. I took last two to three puffs from my cigarette and buried it in to the ash tray. It is said that in the wordly paradise a large number of people had been buried in a very short span of time. In addition to it the elders of our mohalla say that there hasn`tleft any space in the graveyard to bury the deadbodies.It was being said that the lone park of the mohalla would be turned into grave yard. May God have mercy! I was shocked. I got up from the bed suddenly as if I was experiencing a terrific dream with the waking eyes.

After sometime both of us had taken salt tea and were trying tolessen the bitterness of our life. The samovar had more tea in it yet but the early morning light peeped in through the windows was warning that I should now join with the neighbours in the park. I wore on the pheran. I saw towards my wife with helpless eyes and jumped into the slight morning haze. My neighbours had as well started leaving out of their homes. We all were aware about what we had to do. How silently we would aseemble in the park where in past father of a bride used to get the beautiful tents installed and after welcoming the bridegroom he would serve us with the tastefull Kashmiri cuisine, it was in the same park where we dreamed to become Pataudi, Haneef, Bradman and Majid khan in our boyhood. It was in the same park where our MLA rode upon the roof of an ambassador car amid the tight security of the police, delivered a powerful lecture and showed us very beautiful dreams. Today he was himself living in the world of dreams and we were assembling in the park.on entering the gate of the park, I saw my neighbours, who had assembled before me, one by one. I shrank into a corner of the park. It was the same corner of the park where on the occasion of the celebration of the anivarsary of a saint, the confectioners of Uttar Pradesh used to adore the shop with sweetmeat and fried chapattis under a tent. Today there was a tent too in one of the corners of the park, bound on all four sides.

After sometime, when all the boys, men and oldmen assembled in the park, we were directed to stand in queues as usual. Fourteen hundred years have passed since the Islam came as a

way of life but we haven't yet learned to form the straight lines in the mosques. However in these situations we form straight queues in mere a blink of eye. In a computerized style, all the people took out their faces from their pockets, put them on their hands and began to revise their names, parentages, residences and professions. Who knows what would be asked and when? My identity card, adorned with my yellowish photograph under the circular stamp, was too in my hand providing a feeling of existence.

"How many times yet we would have to repeat our names! Now ones own name seems strange to oneself." My intellect was imprisioned in me and we began to cross the bridge over the hell (puli-sirat) one by one.

After completion of journey……..when I retuned to home and reached onto the verandah, there was nothing unexpected waiting for me. I knocked the closed door. After sometime a weak and old women opened the door for me. I tried to recognize her for a long time but all in vain. But when she started talking to me I abruptly screamed, "you……..my wife…….so old."

"Do come in. you have been back after a number of years. Now, nothing lives in this house, except me. There is only a broken mirror inside. That mirror will tell you the whole story. Come and get in……."

She got in but I sat on the verandah because I had not enough strength to reply the querries of the mirror.

About the writer: Zahid Mukhtar lives at Nai Basti, Anantnag, J&K. He is a poet, fiction writer, playwright, actor, director, journalist, Broadcaster, lyricist, stage actor and works in much more fields.

He is producer and director of Almukhtar Films. He has been writing for Radio and Doordarshan since early days.

Publications: printer, publisher and editor of weekly "Almukhtar" and Urdu literary magazine 'Lafz Lafz',

Poetry collection 'Ibtida' in 1984,

Urdu novel 'Khusboo ka safer' in 1982,

Poetry collection 'Sulagtay chinar' in 2004

Short story collection 'Jehlim ka teesra kinara' in 2005, Kashmiri poetry collection 'Tambr-i-Halem,

Short story collection 'Tehreerain' in 2010,

Urdu poetry collection 'Tishnigi' in 2014,

Poetry collection in Kashmiri 'Zarbi qalm' with translation in Urdu in 2015

In addition to the above Zahid Mukhtar's writings are published in leading Urdu magazines of India and abroad.

Awards: Best Eco Award (writer) in 2000s

Second best lyricist by Mehjoor Foundation in 2001

Safeer Urdu by Dayari Adab Aligarh in 2010

Umer Majid Yaadgari Award for literary journalism by J&k Urdu Academy in 2011.

Shamse Maraz by Maraz Adbi Sangam Kashmir in 2016

HUSNA

Dr Mehfooza Jan

Husna was a very beautiful and attractive child. He was being loved by one and all in the neighbourhood. Neighbours used to enlap him. One among these was Mehda Sahab who was sick out of Husna. Mehda sahib repeatedly requested the father of Husna, Naba the bald (who was an embroidery worker) about the adoption of Husna. Mehda sahib used to assure Naba the bald that he would keep Husna as a prince, educate him and grow him a richman. Mehda sahib used to say to him, “I could not produce a child in fifteen years, how can now I produce? Your wife will produce onwards as well.” Naba the bald replied (with saged head) hesitantly, “Mehda sahib, Husna is yours. Day in and day out he remains with your wife Begum Sahiba. Husna cannot live without her. Like the insane, he reaches your home early in the morning even before washing his face. In the evenings, Husna is forcibly taken back by her mother. Mehda sahib replied, “This forcible taking back of Husna is unbearable for us. Due to absence of Husna, we cannot afford taking dinner properly. Mehda sahib was recurrently beseeking him for adoption of Husna. Mehda sahib was the richest man of the area but God hadn`t given him the solace of having his successor.

Naba the bald often suggested his wife Mukhti that Husna be given to Mehdi sahib for adoption. Huana would become a humane, get educated and form his destiny if he is adopted by Mehda sb. But Mukhti was not able to give a thought that Husna be separated from her. Mukhti was not ready to part his son at any cost owing to his motherly love. Mukhti warned Naba the bald that she would prohibit Husna from going to Mehda sahib`s home. On feeling the temperament of Mukhti, Naba the bald was worried that his wife would stop Husna for going to Mehda sahib’s house. Mehda sahib and his wife Sarva were obsessive about Husna.Naba the bald was longing for the adoption of Husna to Mehda sahib. Naba longed for Husna`s education and his dignified settlement. This was possible only in Mehda

sahib`s home. Naba the bald never hoped that his son Husna would do the embroidery work and injure his finger tips by piercing knitting needles. He was very anxious about the future prospects of his son.The longings of Mehda sahib and his wife and the stubborness of the later had put him at the end of the rope. He was finding no way out of this affair. Naba the bald was dreaming Husna in the Mehdi sahib`s guardianship, an educated handsome youth, clad in rich robes adorned by neck-tie, and riding in a motor car. However when he gave thought to his wife Mukhti's stubbornness and negation of Husna adoption to Mehda sahib. Naba figured Husna's youth as one of the poorest of the poor and destitution. He imagined Husna to be clad in patched and ragged dress stitching the golden thread on rich people's dresses. Naba the bald's broad-vision and future consciousness made him very apprehensive about Husna's career. Naba the bald was doing embroidery work for the whole day to satiate the hunger of his family, which he never could.

Husna crossed twenty this Eid. Mehda sb took Husna along with him to bazaar in his car. He bought him new boots and a new suit. It was the day before Eid (Urfa). Husna came running to his mother to show her the boots and the suit. Mukhti was astonished on seeing the boots and the suit. Husna repeatedly appealed his mother to appreciate the new boots and suit but Mukhti not even for showing off appreciated the things. Husna said to her mother, "My Abba Jan bought me new boots and suit.Tommorow he will take for me more." Husna's this expression pierced the heart of Mukhti and she thought that she had lost her game in the gamble of richness and poverty. She acknowledged that Mehada sahib's affection had won the heart of her son. She took everything otherwise. Mehda sahib and his wife Serva were stalking their lives on the mere expressions of Husna.

Naba the bald came home from his embroidery shop late that day.Mukhti had lulled Husna to sleep under her pheran.Husna had kept the boots and suit in a close hug. Nabba the bald went in utter bewilderment on seeing that.

Mukhti said to him, “you have made all this to happen. Hadn’t you been soft on Husna, this would not have happened.Now regain your son.He would leave today or tomorrow certainly.

Nabba the bald replied, “What will we do. Our son has been blessed by Allah with utmost beauty. That is why he is loved and cared by everybody otherwise aren’t there a number of children of his age. Who does worry about them except their own parents.Nabba tried to make Mukhti understand.”

Mukhti was thinking over the issue like a wise mother. How can she afford this? Child is always linked to the heart of mother.A mother cannot see her child being trapped by any body even if it leads to the betterment of the child. The daughter in law who is taken to home with celebrations for the son is often seen with doubtful eyes (as a barrier between son and mother).However here the time was too far for this. Mehda sahib and his wife were fanaticaly loving Husna. Luxurious and kingly but dark bunglow seemed to them illuminating as long as Husna used to play and talk there. As soon as Husna used to leave, Mehda sahib would get into the world of silence.

Mehda sahib and Serva had left no stone unturned for the sake of conception of a baby.Mehda sahib and Serva had taken medical consultation from all over the country.They had even gone to take the blessings of hermits. They had given donations, charities and feasts but who would bless a man until God wishes so. It is the destiny. Some people are longing and begging for a single successor while others are worried for having a number of children.

The more Mehda sahib and Serva loved Husna the less Mukhti let Husna meet them. Sometimes Serva used to visit Bhat Street in order to have a glimpse of him. Whenever Husna had a look on Serva, he used to run towards her for a warm hug leaving her own mother as such. Mukhti longed to lose her temper but the consideration of respect and diginity in neighborhood stopped her from showering of volley of abuses on Serva. Mukhti was

giving casual thoughts to the superstitious beliefs that Serva the infecund might have bad ominous looks on Husna. Serva was often making new dresses and taking them to Nabba the bald`s home for embroidering as a pretence to see Husna. Once Serva visited Nabba the bald`s home and Husna leapt with her. Mukhti could not control herself. She got hold of Husna, almost snatched him from Serva and thrashed him to full. Serva tried to interfere and save Husna But alas! Mukhti let loose her tongue and made very unkind remarks for Serva. These remarks were felt by Serva as razor edges which injured her heart.

Mukhti said to Serva, “you have corrupted my son. By putting the facilities of your riches in his hands, you have made a fun of our poverty.you should not care for my son. Our son will get spoiled in this way.”

On hearing this Serva was dumbfound. Tears rolled down her chubby cheeks and she blinked in darkness. She difficultly stood up and left for home with challenged nerves. She decided that she would never touch any ones child. When she entered home, her eyes were full of tears. When Mehda sb snoticed her stress, he rose up and engulfed her in warm and caring hug. He asked her about the causes of her tears. Serva could not reply and she fell down unconscious. She was taken to hospital instantly. A doctor, after feeling pulse and checking blood pressure, advised Mehda sahib to take consultation from a gynaecologist urgently. The doctor said that Serva might be expecting a baby.Mehda sahib and Serva could not believe it. They felt as if they were dreaming. But for the sake of advice of the doctor, they met a gynecologist for consultation. Fortunately the gynecologist confirmed that Serva was expecting a baby. They consulted a number of gynecologists and every one confirmed pregnancy. Both were very anxious. This thing more like miracle than a usual matter happened fifteen years after their marriage. Months passed by hurriedly in expectation and horror. At the start of ninth month of conception, Serva was admitted to hospital. Remaining for almost a month under medical supervision, Serva gave birth to a handsome male baby.

Celebrations were held. Donations were given, sacrifices were done. There was no limit to rejoicing the event. As soon as mother and son entered home after a month in hospital, the sheep and the goats were sacrificed. Next day the house was packed with relatives and friends. People were coming and going to offer well wishes. The only missing who didn't turn up were Nabba the bald and his wife Mukhti. Whole the day Mehda sahib and Serva were waiting for their beloved Husna's father and mother to turn up as if they were lacking something with out the well wishes from them. They were as well keen to have a glimpse of Husna whom they always looked as their own beloved son. The joy of Mehda sahib and Serva devastated when they came to know that Husna was admitted in the city hospital where he was wagging the war of life and death.Husna was suffering from blood cancer. All people of the neighbourhood were donating him blood turn by turn. Serva and Mehda sahib forgot all about their joy of having a son after fifteen years. They left home for hospital to see Husna. Serva was not physically fit to go to hospital with new born baby but Husna's love did not let her stay at home. As soon as Serva entered the door of the hospital ward, Husna noticed her and abruptly called out to her, "Mummy." Serva handed her son to Nabba the bald and rushed to bed. She enlapped Husna, hugged and kissed him.Both wept bitterly. But alas! Husna took his last breath in the lap of Serva and became silent for ever.

On the fourth day of mourning Mehda sahib declared in public gathering that he and his wife cannot see the lap of Mukhti empty. Without any pre planning Serva stood up from among the woman, took out her baby from under the scarf and put him in the lap of Mukhti and said, " this is your and mine Husna."

About the writer: Dr Mehfooza Jan W/O Mir Muzaffar Ahmad Kamili, teaches Kashmiri at Kashmiri Department University of Kashmir Srinagar. She is a visiting faculty member to centre of distance education, Kashmir University. She is a fiction writer, reviewer, Critic and undertakes a number of assignments related to language, literature and culture. She is member of a number

of national literary forums. She has done a commendable task in critical and historical appreciation of Kashmiri dirge i.e Masnavi.

Publications: She has almost two dozen publications to her credit ranging from fiction, translation, literary criticism to the poetic collections of mystic poets of previous centuries. Some of her acclaimed publications are Maulvan 2009(criticism), Hendryar (translation of Saadat Hussain Manto's short stories) Amarikh Tchaing (collection of Kashmiri short stories) Kashir Masnavi (Akh Tanqeedi Saam) Kasheeri Hind Mazhab (Research work). Kenh Gum Naam Shayir. Etc

In that city

Raheem Rehber

On the white sheet of marble was written his complete address, date and year of his birth, date and year of his death and other related details.

Late Reyaz

Date and year of birth- 13 March 1975 C.E

Date and year of death-14 March 2001C.E

He took this marble sheet along with him wherever he went. The city's scene was strange. The people were laughingly telling each other the news of their deaths. That was the city of stones. That city was ruled by a ruthless despotic prince. The prince was neither listening to nor he had voice to speak. Stony God was worshiped by stony worshipers. The people were the withered words' meaningless text.

All the people of that city used to assemble in the public park just before the sun set. They limitlessly used to laugh and play there. Then they used to weep to the full.After informing each other about their likely deaths they went to their own homes.

In that city the letters the letters and words related to human values like truth, fidelity, justice, charity, pity mercy, morality were severely ill. Some terms like modesty and coyness, faith, civility, and trust were breathing in their last moments. Some words were on their death bed and their semi-dried mouths were being moisturized by the wet cotton wads. Such words were truthfulness, dignity, venerable, mother, sister, daughter. And all the remaining words which existed were dumb, deaf and blind.

In that city, the melodious singing Tickell`s thrush was stricken dumb. The ever wandering, untamed Mynahs were encaged in

the already laden traps. The ever singing Ground thrushes forgot their songs.

All the people of that city are guarding their own corpses.

About the writer: Rahim Rahabar, a poet, author, critic, playwright, translator asnd fiction writer, born on 1st March 1959 at Azad Colony Peth Kanihama tehsil Magam district Budgam, J&K. His short stories have been translated in to English, Urdu, Hindi and other regional languages. Raheem Rehber is a teacher by profession and is headmaster at present.

Publications: Urdu novels 'Hara Gaw, Aferwat Ki Devi, Akhri Kurta bi Chawk hua.

Short Story anthologies: Aash ti Aalaw, Yi doud kar bali, Akhtab, Yakh Khawbi Talawuk. etc. etc.

Drama: 43 radio plays of Rahabar have been broadcasted from Radio Kashmir till yet. 'Neel Mesh', Haas, Yi Dood Kar Bali' are famous TV plays of Rahabar. In addition to it he has written a number of documentaries for DD Srinagar.

Translations: Rahabar translated Gulzar's short story collection 'Duwaan' and Dr Shabnum Ashayee 'Mann Bani' in Kashmiri.

In addition to it Rahabar has been a recurrent contributor to literary magazines of State Cultural Academy i.e Sheeraza, Sheeraz etc and to local daily 'Kashmir Uzma'.

Awards: Senior fellowship award 2010, the Best teacher award 2006, Certificate of Merit by Govt College of Education Srinagar in 2000, Harmukh Award by Harmukh Society Budgam in 2007. Kashmir Cultural Forum award 2017.

A Reverie

Zaffar Muzaffar

After completing the day long rotation, the sun had reached above the mountain to jump into the pass. It was only a matter of some moments….! Bus was running with the fast speed leaving behind the adjoining trees, paddy fields and streams. She was seated in my right side, putting her chin on the hand gazing some mountain peak through the window and deeply contemplating some mysterious puzzles and I was longing to satiate the lifelong thirst in a single sip from the ambrosia lake of her brown eyes. Perhaps a speed breaker came in the way and the driver applied the brakes all of a sudden. All the passengers jerked forward. As if I awoke from the deep slumber and I saw she was gently rubbing her forehead with right hand. I asked her, "Are you hurt?"

"No", replying this she kept mum and turned her glances again to the outside.

I prompted her and asked, "What are you looking there?"

She beckoned with finger to the mountain peak. It was the same peak of Zabarwan mountain on the terrain of which we used to play hopscotch and other games. We used to collect small stones to build the so called homes. We would put small leaves and small lumps of soil in the broken pieces of earthenware to childly cook meals. There used to be a number of boys and girls of our age with us while doing all this. All were discharging their respective responsibilities. Some were washing utensils and some were fetching water.After that cooking of rice and vegetables was done. She used to distribute and serve food and we would eat sitting around her. Then we would play again and go home at the time of sunset.

I saw the veil dropped and rose again. In those days we both were studying in college. One day our college went on an

excursion to Verinag. She too came along with her friends and acquaintances. On reaching there we met each other as usual and enjoyed the talk all through the Verinag. She used to dream about me every day. On that day she said to me, “congratulations. Won’t you give me a treat?”

“On what basis will I give you a treat? I asked after being surprised.

“Tonight in dream I saw your head adorned by a crown.”

“Are you saying truly?”

“Yes, it is true. By you.” after saying this she kissed my forehead. I had taken examination in those very days. The result was out and I secured first position in my class.

I was in the same condition that her jingling laughter solaced my ears. I turned my head towards there and saw that her glances were towards the same mountain peak. Her friend was beside her and she was saying to her, “what happened to you? I straightforwardly ask you. In which imaginary cities you sojourn?”

She replied, “My innocent friend, the city where one has not to go, why should one ask the name of that city?” after saying this she strongly glanced towards me and quite under the lips she offered a flower blooming smile. I felt that both of us were travelling towards the nameless city, keeping hand in hand. She put hand in her crimson coloured purse and took out two green coloured chocolate pieces. She handed over one piece to me and put other one in her mouth. I received the chocolate piece and put it on the tongue. With this my eye lids turned heavy and slumber overtook me.

Had driver not blown the horn loudly, I would not have been awakened. I rubbed my eyes and found that there was not a single passenger in the bus except me. Not even she was there, oh! What is the matter? Has she alighted mid way? But… what

is this? She has left her purse here. I picked her crimson coloured purse from the seat where she was seated and conductor asked me, “Sir, please stand up .Don’t you have to get down.”

“But … Have we reached the city?” I involuntarily spoke out.

“Yes sir, stand up. It has darkened as well.

I got down from the bus with least power in my knees to stand on. But my eyes were searching keenly for someone. My heart was about to burst but to whom would I pour out my heart. Ultimately I proceeded forward with her crimson coloured purse in my hand. At night I reached all alone to that nameless city where everyone was dumb. I tried to scream but I could not.

About the writer: Muzaffar Ahmad Tak alias Zaffar Muzaffar ,son of prominent kashmiri writer Gh Nabi Nazir, born at Yaripora, Kulgam and presently residing at Gogochak, Rangreth Srinagar is a poet, fiction writer, radio and TV script writer and broadcaster. He is working in J&K academy of Art, Culture and languages and his present position is Chief Editor Kashmiri Encyclopedia.

Publications: 1. Arzath-A book containing articles on various aspects of Kashmiri language and literature.

2. Translation of of the Fifth part of Kalhan’s Rajtarangini into Kashmiri published by J&K academy of art, culture and languages.

3.Edited a number of issues of ‘Sheeraza’ kashmiri magazine of JKAACL and ‘Soan Adab” annual anthology of kashmiri published by JKAACL

4. Translated more than 100 entries of Kashmiri Encyclopedia into Urdu which have been published in “Sheeraza” Urdu.

5. Associated with Kashmiri Encyclopedia and Concise Kashmiri Dictionary Projects of JKAACL as chief editor for last

five years, besides compiling dozens of entries for the said projects

Besides the already mentioned works, a number of research oriented critical papers written by Zaffar Muzaffar have also been published in various magazines.

The pain

Ali Ilyas

Rasha was now looking like a lost soul. Sometime he seized one thing and sometime another. He often remained restless as if he felt himself incomplete. Now he was often keeping his books aside. Sometime he would listen to tragic songs from radio and other time he used to watch tragic films of Dilip kumar on C D player. He would wander through out the day hither and thither to pass the time and all through the night he would gaze at the sky, count the stars and in turn feel sad on seeing the moon and think, “where could she be at the moment. Would she be gazing at the moon as I do through out the night?”

Rasha was watching the shining moon amidst the darkness of the night and meanwhile the flocks of cloud hid the moon. Sometimes the moon crept out visible and other time it went invisible behind the clouds. He recollected how Chanda was revolving round him as the moon is revolving round the sun.She often stayed at Pandit spring. In the evening most of the girls would assemble at the spring, play, talk and sometime sang. Chanda would remain with them. Rasha would go out after taking tuition from Choni lal and Chanda would often smile on seeing him. Once he was going out of the higher secondary and Chanda hit him voluntarily in a filmy style. As a result all of his books scattered on the road. Saying sorry she helped him in collecting books and in this way they started talking and coming close to one another. Chanda went to Choni lal as well for taking tuition in the great fondness of Rasha. Whenever she would talk to Rasha smilingly or look to him by wine filled eyes with a glasnce of love, the mark on the Choni lal`s forehead would blaze like a burning charcoal and he would make an angry glance on her. But she would not consider Choni lal’s such an angry glance because she had fallen in fascinating love of Rasha like an enchanted lady. However Rasha tried very hard to remain away but Chanda taunted him by declaring him coward. Due to

which Rasha's courage empowered and he started the lovely affair of love with her.

Now they were often meeting at the Pandit spring after taking tuition from Choni lal till late hours. He recollected; her face like an ambri apple, eyes brows like bows, the dagger like nose, the eyes like the cups of wine, the lips like the rose petals, teeth like the pearls, the long hair like the black clouds, the smiling face, the swany neck, the attractive plumpness of the bosom, symmetrical shape and size, upright and wavy stature and sweat and sugary talks. His heart ached and he began sighing in her memories. A stream of tears began flowing from his eyes and till late he was casting up the thoughts. He was not aware that night was breathing in its last moments. Meanwhile sleep overtook him and in dream he was in the Pandit street discussing some issue with Chanda as they used to do before.

He was in deep slumber and was awakened by mothers call, "Rasha, hey dear Rasha. Get up.The day has passed its big time. Get up. Don't you have to take tea?" Now he hadn't appetite as well.He seemed to be tired now, his eyes had sunken in the skull. His body had thinned as well.Rasha was going to college for the day and passing time with his friends in wandering here and there. But Chanda never dislocated from his eyes even for a moment. He had now developed a sort of disliking for the girls that is why girls were declaring him proud. He was neither talking to girls nor he was staying in their company. He was sometimes perceiving Chanda`s resemblance in any girl and going near her but……

After coming back from college.He was playing cricket at Darna Mazar but his heart always remained with Chanda. He was any way passing the day but the night would come to eat him. Whole the day he would remain in tension that night would come. The night; black, faded and dark night: frightening and drear night. The idea of night would irritate even his day's passage as well.

The evening azaan was summoning the worshipers on loud speakers but Rasha was listening to Mohd Rafi`s painful songs on cassette player. He thought that now his condition was not hidden from his mummy daddy. Despite his trials he could not hide his condition of hear t from any body. He was withered from within. Now the goddess of sleep had as well left from him displeased. He would think only about Chanda but he would not reveal to anybody the condition of his heart. All of a sudden he recollected Ashoka. Earlier he was not even talking to Ashoka but later Ashoka helped him eagerly in making love relationship with chanda. Chanda was a neighbor of Ashoka. Ashoka wanted to have love relation with chanda but Chanda never responded to him.

She was keeping the idol of Rasha in her heart and worshiping it. Whenever she called Ashoka as brother, he would burn from within. But later Ashoka helped Chanda and Rasha so many times in meeting each other. Ashoka was a lone credible friend whom Rasha could tell the condition of his heart. Rasha recollected all the assistance provided by him. Ashoka was helping him often and in this way he had become a bosom friend of him. He would keep his house at the disposal of Rasha and Chanda. Rasha would usually pass hours with Chanda and rearing the future dreams in Ashoka`s house.

The night had finished the most of its journey but Rasha was still looking towards the sky in such a way as if he was pondering over some special date in the calendar. All the events of life were coming to his mind one by one. He recollected that the days which he spent with Chanda were very sweet and pleasing. He recollected that once she had gone to Srinagar and remained for three days there. He had lived these three days with unbearable impatience and pain. He was very enraged on her staying in Srinagar. He was going round and round her house and the Pandit spring hundreds of times. He had decided that when Chanda would come back from Srinagar, he would not meet her but when he heard that she had come from Srinagar, he forgot every thing and immediately rushed to pandit spring. But

alas! All of a sudden there was a wind storm…a flood…thunder shower…earthquake…the protest marches went out. There were slogans: long live, down down. Then the bullets were shot. The bombs exploded and the overall lovable environment turned to one of hatred. The explosives got ignited and every thing was on fire. The people fled away where they could. The people of east reached west and of the west to east. The people lost their homes as well as tracks of each other. She had sent him a message to meet her tomorrow at pandit spring but that tomorrow never came again. Choni lal fled away along with household items and so did Ashoka. Chanda as well dislocated to some unknown place along with her parents. Nobody's whereabouts could be known. To save him from that fiery flash Rasha was send to his maternals in Srinagar to study but he was now quite disinclined to studies. After two years recurrent failurein class twelfth, he was taken back home by his parents. After starting the studies at home again, he had now reached to college level sluggishly but his heart was dissatisfied and restless. The promises of Chanda would come to his mind. He struggled hard to find her but he could neither know the whereabouts of Ashoka nor of Chanda. He thought that he would not be in her memory now and said to himself, "She would be living life comfortably somewhere and I am always in pain and uncertainty. There is the exchange of bullets and here a landmine exploded. There a grenade is hurled and here the gun shots are heard."

He wanted to sleep but in that fiery storm his sleep was burnt too. Chanda had even finished his sleep. He felt suffocated. He rose up and drank a glass of water.

Rasha was taking tea with his family members in the morning and meanwhile Kar sahib entered into the room. After making salutations, he was served with tea. Rasha`s mother asked Kar sahib why didn't he visit them for last three or four days. He replied, "I had gone to Jammu.Chanda got wedded to an engineer from Mumbai. She was very happy."

On listening to this, a mountain fell on Rasha's head.Meanwhile cup of tea dropped from his hand. His heart ached severely. His legs trembled. He rose up with a thrust and was about to ascend to his room but he fell down with a thud and turned unconscious.

About the writer: Ali Ilyas teaches Kashmiri at college level and is versatile in almost all genres of Kashmiri literature. He is a resident of Kulgam district.

Culprit

Shahzada rafeeq

“No, No, that could not happen…that could not happen.”

Ruksana made her father weep by denying. Her father hid face in the hands and began sobbing. He was having her whole past cherished in his eyes, Ruksana’s day and date of birth, the day of admission in school etc. To recuperate Ruksana’s mother or to arrange fee for Ruksana’s admission he had to take a rope and a pad to carry people’s goods for earning money. Remaining nearly belly-pinched, he made his lone daughter Ruksana complete masters degree in arts. And it was his most precious desire. Ruksana’s father recollected the ropes which he used while carrying loads. These ropes used to leave marks on his body. He fainted and while falling down he was kept by Ruksana with her bosom.

Ruksana was a college lecturer now. In addition to it she was sewing and knitting as well. But each time she declined to get married in a rich family. After a consistent struggle Ruksana was allowed to get married to a boy of his choice after devastating her parents` desire to get her married in a rich and prosperous family.

Ruksana was now going to college on foot because she had been entrusted with a number of responsibilities.

One day while she was coming from college, there was a windstorm. The chill was piercing through the organs. This windstorm is a frequent visitor to this hilly area. After an hour or two this windstorm slows down in such a manner as if there had not been one. But in this hour or two, the windstorm disperses the roof tops of the huts and houses of the poor on land and knocks down the trees which blocked the roads. Ruksana began going towards a hut to save herself from the biting cold and wild

wind. This hut was as well stripped of its roof by the wind.there was hue and cry inside. Ruksana knocked the door.

“Who is it?” saying this, a young man reached to the door.

“You, thou, who are you? What have you?”, while saying this, the young man stuck himself to the door sill and Ruksana entered in.

As soon as her glances fell on the young man, she felt that her hopes had budded and search had yielded results. She saw that it was a family of only four members; Aslam, his sister Ayesha and his father and mother. She had cherished some faith. She asked them their names and their professions. They addressed her as ‘madam’. Ruksana could not tolerate this and she protested, “No, no, mother, I am your daughter. Don’t call me madam.”

“Daughter, Aslam had recently completed B.A.” Aslam`s mother said putting tongue under the teeth.

“B.A” Ruksana chanced to spoke out loudly when she listened to it and felt coy.

“But daughter, he cannot study more”, mother stressed. Ruksana broke down on listening to this.

‘I will make Aslam study. Aslam will be made to study by me.” Ruksana thought but didn’t tell any body.

The intensity of windstorm had ebbed. Ruksana left but nobody asked her name, address or profession. Neither, she told of her own. Aslam wanted to ask after she left from there. He followed her, walked fast, reached near her and called out to her. Subsequently, both of them sat, introduced among each other and on departing Ruksana stressed upon Aslam for going to university for higher studies.

Ruksana was now usually going to Aslam’s home. She was replying his letters. She used to send money to to Aslam and

even promising rewards so that Aslam would pass M.A. with good marks. But Aslam was ever changing in terms with Ruksana. Whenever he was coming home from university, he was not making Ruksana aware about it. He wrote letters to Ruksana. But she felt the hollow emotions and some duplicacy on part of Aslam while reading the letters. Ruksana's marriage was a haunting affair for her parents.

Ruksana held that she was healing touch to her parents' injuries and bonus for the injuries of their youth. She wanted that the belief of her parents on her should not efface. Thus she went to university.

On entering the gate of the university her glances fell on the flowery lawn. She spoke out, "Aslam, what is this.Aslam." She saw Aslam after opening her eyes wide and mustering all her five senses, playing with his classmates.He was adorning their hair with flowers and kissing them. She saw the events clearly. Before leaving she told some boys to remember her to Aslam. Then she married to a professor on the advice of her parents. Despite all this she was on certain occasions going to Aslam's home. She was replying to Aslam's letters and even sending money to him. God knows better why she did that. Perhaps it was because she was well aware about her parents' pains and joys and thus she wanted to lessen the pain of others' parents. This was also because Aslam was the result of her desires and long search.

While replying the letters she saw a letter of Aslam. He had enlivened the words with love and emotions.

Ruksana was deeply loved and emotionally catered by Professor Iqbal but the words of Aslam left her bereft of the satisfaction. God knows better why. She got ignited from within. A year had passed when she came to know. She felt happy that Aslam had completed M.A. that too with good grades. Aslam was coming back. Ruksans along with her husband was waiting at the airport on his arrival. After sometime an aeroplane landed.

Exiting before all passengers Aslam glanced on Ruksana and came with open arms to embrace her.

But when Aslam reached near her, he broke down on seeing Ruksana hand in hand with some other fellow. “What, what is this?” saying this, the hail like tears rolled down her eyes. Ruksana introduced her husband and boy friend among each other. Ruksana told her that the event when she had gone to university to see him. Aslam uttered, “And that…that…but.” Ruksana replied, “NO…no…Aslam that was a blow to my dignity, a merciless blow. I had not strength to endure that. You are a culprit. Such a culprit whom my heart, my withered heart can never forget.” The monsoon rain flowed from her eyes and moistened her worn out existence.

About the Writer: Shahzada Rafiq born at and resides at Meemander Shopian J&K. He is a poet, critic, fiction writer, translator, cultural activist and was also a stage actor and director. He has been a member of Sahitya Academy advisory board for Kashmiri from 2008-2012. He is president of Maraz Cultural Sangam renowned literary organisation of Jammu and Kashmir. He is also associated with Bazmi Saqafat Kasmir.

Publications: 1.Kuliyati Ab Gafar Mashkoor (poetry of Ab.Gafar Mashkoor) along with Rasheed Sarshar

2. Kuliyati Majid Shopiani(poetry of Majid Shopiani) along with Rashid Sarshar.

3. ‘Aasiya’ Translation of Russian Novel of Turgenev along with Rashid Sarshar.

4. Editor of Kashmiri literary magazine “Maraz” published by Maraz Cultural Sangam, shopian, J&K.

5. Editor of Kahmiri literary Magazine “Saqafat” published by Bazmi Saqafat Kashmir.

The chinar

Yousuf jehangeer

“Grandpa, Grandpa, hey grandpa”

Roshan khayal was impatient and apprehensive.His tongue had throbbed out while running. His condition was such as if he had seen whole the village on fire.

“Grandpa, hey grandpa”

Ama uncle took out his head from the window and asked him in an impatient tone, “Dear son, what is the matter? Is everything alright?”

“Granda, the chinar on the way hasn’t leafed out. That is like a burned stem”

Ama uncle exhaled a long breath and laughed like an experienced and wise man. Roshan khayal was surprisingly looking towards his grandfather and the gushes of tears seemed to ooze out from his eyes as if his hopes had devastated forever.

Ama uncle felt the condition of his heart and said to him, “Oh my innocent son. It isn’t the time of leafing out of the chinar. It is too early now. The snow patches still exist in the shady areas yet.”

On listening to this Roshan Khayal was surprised more and he screwed up his face and said to his grandfather, “then why had the leaflets of rat ear size erupted from willow trees?”

“Oh simpleton.Don’t you know that willow trees broke buds in early spring”, Ama uncle said to him in a mature accent.

But Roshan Khayal was not satisfied. He was guided by his conscience that there was something wrong due to which the

chinar wasn't leafing out. Roshan Khayal's father Ghulam Nabi was listening to the conversation of the grandfather and grandson. While putting the account ledger in the bag he said to his son, "Come and leave the issue. Take this bag along with you to the *shop. What does the chinar need leaves for now? It has to* be cut down."

Ama uncle's heart ached and he said to his son, "hey, Ghulab Nabi. What is wrong with you? Why you say such bad and ill ominous things. If it is the auspicious moment of divine acceptance, what can we do then?"

"Hey dad, Leave this idea of auspicious moments. This is not the bad and ill ominous talk. The high way is to be build through here and the order to cut down the chinar has already been issued."After saying this bad news Ghulam Nabi left for the shop and Ama uncle stuck motionless on the window sill as if he turned lifeless. He thought, "Is Ghulam Nabi saying truth. If he is saying truth, what will happen then? Then the stay mound would be lost. But how can be the village headmen so irresponsible and careless that they will let the chinar to be cut for the road. There is vast land around. Is it essential to build the road through the space where the chinar stands? Ama uncle recollected his late father as if sayig to him right then, "Hey Ama! Save this little chinar more than your life. You will enjoy its shadow in old age. Moreover the travelers would cool their sweat in its shadow as well."

After comprehending the past era, Ama uncle decided that he should try to save the chinar. He took his woolen sheet and reached to village headman. The headman, keeping the cap bulging to one side of skull in his typical style, was in the yard smoking from a hookah. When he saw Ama uncle, he grimaced in dislike. He thought that Ama might have come to demand something early in the morning. Ama uncle saluted him and the headman welcomed him only for the sake of formality. "Oh! Hey, how has Ama joo taken our way today? Nowadays you are not even showing your face. Since Ghulam Nabhi started

business on the shop, you have adopted the style of a typical businessman."

Ama Uncles face was tinged with a colour as that of lily. Considering unimportant to reply the welcome of headman, he immediately expressed his purpose of coming.

"Hey, Ama joo, you are yet living in the orthodox age. Tell me what is significance of the hollowed chinar? The high way will be built through the village. That will be adornment to the village.Shops will be built and market will be established. The village will prosper. Why do you worry about the hollowed chinar? Go and rest. You cannot understand the secret of the progress of modern era."

Ama uncle left hopelessly and reached home. He forgot his meals and was entangled in restlessness. But what could he do?

When all the village heads went out of the mosque after praying in the evening, Ama uncle grabbed the opportunity and requested them. "Hey! It is said that high way will be build through here. It is good thing. It will lead to progress and development. But to cut down the chinar on the way is not right. Here is vast land and is it essential that the chinar is cut. I say that we should oppose and stop cutting of the chinar. It is a shadowy mound for we people as well as for the way farers."

All listened to the Ama uncle's speech. But except one or two old men it seemed to all that he was saying nonsense. All the men rebuked and told him that he could not understand the secret of the development of the new era. Ama uncle was now hopeless and he felt more restless than before. On reaching home he called out to Ghulam Nabi and said to him, "Hey Ghulam Nabi, we will not let them cut the chinar. Cutting the chinar would not be good. It is the identity of our past era as well as of present one. You help me and we will make villagers understand that the cutting of chinar means to strike axe on our own legs."

"Ho dad! You are now old and you have turned senseless too. What is need of chinar? Once the road is build, the village will develop. I will get a new shop. Market will be edtablished. To talk of the chinar, what is it special for?" While grimmacing his face Ghulam Nabi said to his father.

Before that Ama uncle would say something Ghulam Nabi said to him again, "Go and sleep. Machine will come tomorrow and cut it into pieces."

On listening to this, Ame uncle found difficult to breath. His tongue throbbed and turned dry and voice could not rise from throat. Ghulam Nabi left and Ame uncle went to bed without eating anything. He could not sleep because he was thinking only about the chinar.

He thought, "What the hell happened to the sense of the villagers and why don't they understand that the chinar is our identity. The preacher who has learned the nursery primer from his father under shade of the same chinar and is earning his livelihood from that learning, does not care about it.The village headman whose father had decided so many cases under the chinar and who has himself solved so many conflicts under its shade hasn't anything in memory. Whoever among the villagers is not benefitted by the chinar in one way or other? But this time nobody cares for it."

Ama uncle was in severe tension due to break free thinking about the chinar. Again and again father's advice flashed to his mind and his heart ached itchingly. "Ama, Care for this chinar more than you care for your life. You will enjoy the cool breeze under it in old age."

The day dawned and the sun rose. The sky had a cataract of cloud and the sun was without vigour and vitality. Merely after taking tea, all the villagers assembled on the road. Meanwhile the machine reached the spot. All were happy as if there was to be the celebration of a festival. The machine reached to the chinar. And the saw of the machine began cutting the chinar.

The saw-machine was running on petrol. How much time would it take to cut the chinar into two pieces? Unexpectedly the saw bleeded and blood oozed from the injured stem. Every one took it that the chinar was haunted.

As soon as the chinar fell down, Ame uncle's bisected corpse too fell out from the hollow stem of the chinar.

About the writer: Yousuf Jehangir, a resident of Awaneera shopian Kashmir, teaches English at Rehmati-Aalam college of Education Anantnag. He is a poet, critic and Fiction writer in Urdu and Kashmiri. His writings publish in Wyethe Aagur noted Kashmiri sliterary magazine published by Maraz Adbi Sangum.

Dupatta (The scarf)

Rayees Jannisar

She was quite young and very beautiful too. God had blessed her with thes bewitching youth.

But alas! She was entangled by poverty. To put out the fire of stomach, she used to beg at the crossing in the market till evenings. She used to hide her face with a soiled, faded and worn out dupatta. Instead of begging for whole the day her begging bowl would partly fill and she longed for its filling to the full.

One day was auspicious for her as her destiny was turned to good. When she sat at the crossing that day, the notes of five and ten rupees began to be dropped in the bowl one after the other recurrently. The bowl which had never filled even to evening, was full much before the noon today. In fact, that day she had forgot her dupatta in haste at home.

About the writer: Rayees Jannisar, Resident of Hutmarah District Anantnag and by profession a journalist, is a poet and fiction writer in Kashmiri and Urdu languages.

Publicatins: 1.‘Shehlath’ Kashmiri poetry 2. ‘Haresaath’ Kashmiri poetry

Awards:1.Yuwa Puraskar by Bhartiya Bhasha Parishad (NGO from Kolkata) in 2012. 2.Shamaie Maraz by Maraz Adbi Sangam (a literary organisation of J&K.

The moon was blocked

Mubashir izhar

Gulzar used to play so eagerly with the children of village that he forgot not only meals but also his home. One day Gulzar was more enthusiastic as he had discovered a new game. Gulzar was so happy as if he had conquered a country and got a kingdom. He was so impatient to acquaint the children with this new game that he could not sleep and passed whole the night waiting the break of day. The morning glimmered but his heart turned sad because the moon had set. He had a new experiment on the moon. But when the moon was invisible, what will he show to the children? How could the children of the village believe on his theory? He kept the secret safe in heart and hidden in mind. He said to the children, “Today in the evening I will show you a new thing.” He was waiting impatiently throughout the day for the moon to rise. He was compelled by parents to eat something but he could not eat anything. He thought only about the rise of the moon and casually he felt anxious whether the moon would rise or not. He didn’t loose the secret but kept mum as if he was breathless.

He heard azan (call for prayer) in the evening and his face rekindled. He kept gazing towards the sky. He wandered from yard to yard to summon the children. All the children of the village assembled and said to him, “what are you going to show us? What the mind blowing thing you have discovered?”

Gulzar said to them, “All of you look towards the sky. The moon rose.”

The children asked, “It rises daily. What new thing it has taken along today.”

Gulzar said, ‘no, nothing. You see only towards the moon and move from yard to yard.”

The children fixed their glances at the moon. They walked from yard to yard and the moon moved along with them.when one child declared that the moon was walking along with him and other one declared the same thing as well, they quarreled to assert themselves. But the moon was so affectionate and caring that it kept the heart of all the children happy and walked along with them all.

Gulzar was married in youth and he had his own children. Gulzar's son has left crawling and was running from yard to yard. Gulzar told the remarkable discovery to his son proudly but he was not believed by him. Gulzar was proved to be a liar. Gulzar's son too saw the moon rising in the evening but it was neither sympathetic to him nor caring. The moon had altered its nature and conduct as if it had grown old. It hadn't strength to walk. The moon was entangled in the yard of Gulzar because he had built a high wall around his house. The moon was not moving from yard to yard now because Gulszar had blocked its view. He had blocked its way. Gulzar's son too looked towards the moon and started to walk but he was struck to the wall. His head injured and bleeded but the moon had no impact of it.

About the author: Mubashir Izhar lives at Waghama, Bijbehara Anantnag, J&k. He is a poet, reviewer, fiction writer and above all a Cultural activist. He had been General Secretery of Maraz Adbi Sangam, Second largest literary organisation of Jammu and Kashmir, for over two decades.

Publications: 'Wyoor' Kashmiri poetry. In addition to it his writings publish in reputed Kashmiri journal Wyethe Aagur published by Maraz Adbi Sangam.

Snowy Idol

Mudasir lali

It was cool and silent winter. The night was extremely cold. All the biotic and abiotic things around had frozen. The hibernal cold wind was stinging as the Himalayan serpent does and blood was tangled in the veins.

In such a night, a shadow was crossing through the snowy meadows on the banks of the tributarys Rambi Ara. A young mother who had abandoned her village was running towards the rising sun. She was fleeing away from her village because the village was invaded by demons. She was fleeing in order to save her self respect and her baby.

A river was on the way and on both the banks of the river, cross firing was going on. She was hearing the boom of bullets and inhaling the smoke of the explosives.

The young mother was fleeing away. She was struggling to reach among her own people as soon as possible to experience a feeling of safety. She intended to reach the peaceful and free habitation at any cost. Despite that the snow storm might take away her life, she wanted to complete this sacred mission primarily. She wanted to keep alive the symbol of her love. The mother was running forward courageously but the snow covered sand spreaded endlessly. She broke down as snow was piercing her body like a spear. All of a sudden she felt that baby was cooling down in her lap. She perplexed utterly and was looking over for a shade so that she could envelop him with some more clothes in order to warm him. Fortunately she saw two black shadows. These were actually two wide trees conjoined to each other. She stood under these trees to stay and do the task.

She had lost her capacity. The snowy wind was sucking her face in its typical burning aptitude. “My baby is cooling. He

cannot endure the freezing gusts of snowy wind", such kind of frightening words began to irritate his mind.

"No, no, I cannot leave the baby whom I saved from killers in the lap of snow. if the whole world conceals under it and all living stops, I will take out my heart, motherly heart and warm my baby in it", saying this she threw fear out of her mind.She took out her jacket and enveloped her baby in it. Some moments passed and the moments seemed to her not as long as years or decades but as long as ages. The snowy wind was burning her body as the hot red iron from the hearth of smithy could burn it.

She felt again that her baby is cooling down and didn't even think for herself. She took out her shawl and lapped it around him. Now the gusts of snowy wind were piercing through her body. She felt that death was near her. Now she felt herself freezing. Now the capacity to live was exhausted in her.

She took out her frock and enveloped it around him too in order to warm him. She was ready to die in order to keep her baby alive. She kept baby tight to her naked body and while providing motherly warmth she said to him silently, "My dear, I have nothing other than my heart by which I will import to you the warmth of life. Even the dying trembles of the heart are only yours."

Mother became silent but her ears still heard the tinkling sound. She heard thye trampling sound upon the snow but she was not able to see who it was. She had stuck to the posy of the trees. The ruthless night of the winter had dressed her with new clothes. The snowflakes had adorned her dress with varied and delicate flowers.

The day dawned and the sun rose like a sharp and uncovered sword. There were three persons on the ambush under the shadow of the trees. They were dressed in white clothes to camouflage their presence which would otherwise be perceptible to their enemies. They were the scouts who used to utter the slogans; long live mother land.

There was a haunting and breath taking scene before them.The scene which could not be forgotten. There was snow-idol of the frozen woman. All the three escorts stood on that holy and sacred altar for a long time but sans sense and sans movement. Consequently one of the three came in front of the idol. He started to clear the snow from the idol with dying hopes. He started to unravel the bundle of clothes that the woman had kept with her bosom. While turning away the clothes with the trembling fingers, he looked upon a baby in side. The young man struck dumb and fled backwards. “The baby is living. He is seeing. He is not frozen”, he cried with hiccoughs. The baby started to animate his lips in the warmth of the sunrays.

Those young escorts who had experienced fire, water and blood could not restrain their tears. They stooped in front of her feet and solemnly resolved to save her beloved and avenge on those who had caused her to arrive to such an awe stricken situation.

They left the spot taking the baby in the lap. They left keeping in mind the sacrifice of the great mother and the immortal idea and idol of motherness.

About the writer: Mudasir lali is an Urdu poet. She writes fiction in Kashmiri. She is a resident of Dangam, Shopian and serves in education department. She has published a collection of Urdu poetry.

There is no denying the fact that English has attained the status of a global language in the present scenario. Its dominance is vividly felt in every sphere and as such it has got a global audience.Given this backdrop Mr Ashraf Ravvie needs to be appreciated for translating the Kashmiri short stories into English. The stories have been meticulously selected and cover a wide array of themes and subjects delineating social, economic amd political realities of Kashmir since 1947.The work will help to introduce Kashmiri short stories to the global audience.

Dr.Aejaz Mohammad Sheikh

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Srinagar.

It is a rare privilege for me to introduce Mr Ashraf Raavie an eminent poet, critic and translator to his prospective readers.My study of his works; literary, critical and translatory make me unequivocally aver that they quintessentially breathe out the features of freshness and originality. He has a metier for criticism and appears to be one of the exponents of New Criticism in Kashmiri literature. This anthology of translation of Kashmiri short stories in English is his significant work. It will provide an opportunity to non Kashmiri speaking people to understand the ethos and values and the social, economic and political conditions of Kashmir. The short stories have been choosen from the pioneer fiction writers to the current ones in the field.As such the work will surely help in studying the emergence and development of fiction in Kashmiri language.

Ajaz Wani, Shopian
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